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MAKERS of SONG

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BY

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN

AUTHOR OF "MASTERS OF MUSIC,"
"THE STORY OF THE RHINEGOLD," ETC.

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TO

Madame Lillian Nordica

WITH THE AUTHOR'S GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF HER MANY AND GRACIOUS KINDNESSES

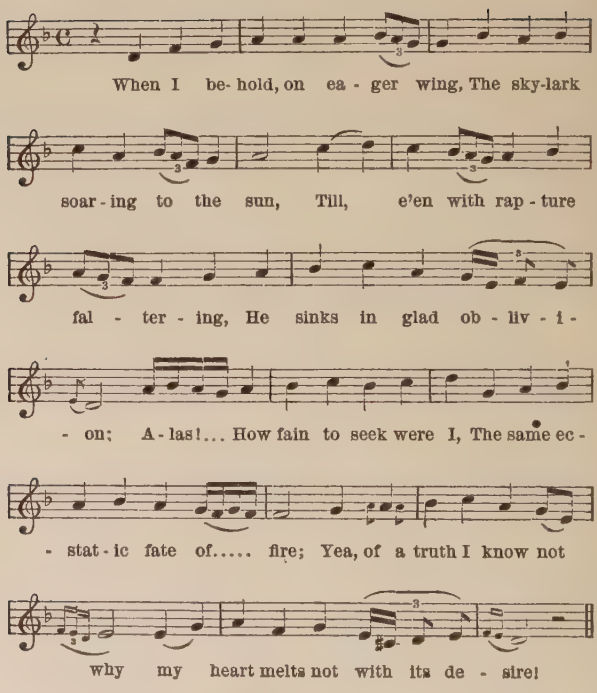
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Singer of Love	1
II.	In Praise of the Lady of Fayel	25
III.	The Dreamers	49
IV.	The Monk of Reading Abbey	65
V.	King Thibault, the Troubadour	83
VI.	The Hunchback of Arras	109
VII.	With the Castanets	131
VIII.	A Maker of Songs and Shoes	155
IX.	Maître Guédron, a Teacher of Kings	175
X.	The Wandering People	191
XI.	The Casket of Grapes	207
XII.	The Scullion of La Grande Mademoiselle	229
XIII.	The Runos of the Northland	257
XIV.	The Romance of Stradella	277
XV.	Purcell: Master of Musick	293
XVI.	Songs of the Great Terror	315
	An After-word	333

THE SINGER OF LOVE

LARK SONG


When I be- hold, on ea - ger wing, The sky-lark
soar - ing to the sun, Till, e'en with rap - ture
fal - ter - ing, He sinks in glad ob - liv - i -
- on; A - las!... How fain to seek were I, The same ec -
- stat - ic fate of..... fire; Yea, of a truth I know not
why my heart melts not with its de - sire!

I

THE SINGER OF LOVE

NOW the Castle of Ventadour, in Limousin, Provence, was a goodly place and a fair. Indeed it would be hard to fancy a more rarely perfect spot in which to be born and to come to manhood, and its poetic loveliness spurred the inspiration, as it filled the daily life, of the boy Bernart.

The hamlet of Moustier Ventadour may still be seen. A league and a half east of Egletons it is, and the ruins of the Castle are a quarter of a mile farther on. The ruins of Ventadour! It is as sorrowful an image as that of faded roses or dead youth: alas, that even Ventadour should have known the destructive touch of time!

But at the period of which I write,—the early half of the twelfth century,—it was a splendid pile set high upon a hill, in a country of wild and picturesque beauty. Crowding about the stone walls, every kind of tree possible to Provençal soil lifted its heavy leafage to the warm blue sky, and afforded nesting-space to the swallows and nightingales, the ring-doves and larks, that made that region melodious.

From his earliest childhood Bernart loved his lyrical brothers, the birds. But of all the feathered things that trilled and fluttered among the pines and larches and silver birches, the one whose song awakened the tenderest and most responsive chord in the boy's heart was the skylark. Upon this same joyous bird was written his most exquisite lyric, many years later,—the simple and graceful Lark Song known to every lover of the Provençals.

Imagine a garden where forget-me-nots and clover, roses and hemp, grew wildly and sweetly together. Fancy a fragrant luxuriance of blackthorn, ivy, evergreens, lilacs, and locust-trees. Picture mossy rocks, and great tangles of wild-flowers and blackberry-vines;—and you may guess, albeit dimly,—the enchantment of Ventadour. Under a great chestnut-tree stood a stone crucifix,—hundreds of years old, even then! And back of the Castle was the big delicious garden. It was walled by parapets that crowned sharp precipices and made the garden entirely inaccessible from without.

Shadowed by a tall blue-green pine-tree was the pavilion, or summer-house,—where my lady might sit at her embroidery-frames, or, dreaming idly, watch the misty distance from her lofty garden-space. Everywhere creeping vines abounded, overgrowing everything,—the pavilion, the parapets, and the walls of the Castle. Everywhere flowers starred the green,

and the hosts of rapturous birds sang and darted unendingly beneath the sun-gilded clouds.

In Ventadour, about the year 1125, was born he whom the world hails as Bernart de Ventadorn.

A mystery shadows the birth of young Bernart de Ventadorn. Even in his lifetime there were few who knew, or at least avowed, the truth. There are those who say that he was an unacknowledged member of the Ventadorn family,—the patrons whose name he bore. These same persons declare that it was this fact which made Ebles III. Vicomte de Ventadorn so friendly in his favours to the boy. Others state that his mother was a serving-wench who gathered brushwood to feed the great bake-ovens of the Castle, and his father one of the lower servants, who marched as a common archer, when the Vicomte's men were called to arms. However this may have been, it seems a matter of small import to-day. The greatness of Bernart—surnamed de Ventadorn, after his benefactor Ebles III., Vicomte de Ventadorn,—could not be made nor marred by a mere accident of birth. Let us not trouble our minds with the antecedents of this most wonderful boy. It is enough that he was the favourite of Ebles III., and that through his kindness the boy was educated as befitted a gentleman of that period. The Vicomte loved music, luckily, and Bernart's rare gift of song was fostered and developed until he be-

came known throughout Provence as Bernart le Chanteur (Bernart the Singer). And he was most grateful, and loved Ebles well; and, as he grew proficient in the lyric art, he sang to him by the hour, charming the Vicomte's ears with the melody of his golden voice.

The Vicomte Ebles, we gather, was a fine and generous knight, of rare breadth and vigour of mind, and graced with a heart that was clean alike of deception and distrust. In people and things the quality which pleased him best was energy. This trait was curiously and quaintly expressed by the Prior of Vigeois, who said of him: "*Usque ad senectam carmina alacritatis dilexit* (He loved, even to his old age, the songs of alacrity)."

Certain chroniclers tell us that our Bernart, brought up in the accepted theory of his inferiority in birth, suffered keenly from a sense of humiliation, and grieved because he belonged to his gorgeous environment by privilege rather than right. According to the conception of the boy's character based upon his life and songs, it is difficult to believe this. If he permitted himself any sentiments of sadness on account of his obscure origin, assuredly they were transient. Bernart was a son of the south, and his griefs and annoyances, if poignant, were fleeting.

He loved romance and beauty and joy as he loved

the air he breathed, and the mellow Provençal sun beneath which he grew to manhood. With the pallid ecstasies and sentimental woes affected by lesser Trouvères he would have nothing to do. He had no patience with false melancholy, though his sensitive and poetic heart could know the depths of genuine suffering. His deepest fault was his headlong and unreasoning impetuosity. What he wished he would have gone down to Hades to claim!

No one was ever born with the love of life so keenly inherent; no one ever throbbed more vitally and responsively to the appeals of sentiment, poetry, and passion. He was educated in a monastic school, but the religious life neither attracted nor interested him. He chafed within the austere walls, where the good monks taught him such meagre rudiments of knowledge as were accounted culture in those days. Only one thing did he really care to study, and that was music. Verse-making was as instinctive and spontaneous with him as singing is to birds; but the use of his own voice, and, above all, the correct manner of playing the instruments of the period,—these things seemed to him worth learning. He accordingly applied himself to the study of minstrelsy. He learned to touch the harp, vielle, and lute with a master hand, and to sing like the skylark he adored. He learned to put down his eager dreams and rapturous fancies in notes as well as words. And the poems and melodies

which he made have lost neither fire nor beauty after nearly eight centuries.

From boyhood he had but one theme for all his songs—love. He cared nothing for warfare, nor the church, nor politics, nor merry-making. Romance was his dream, his inspiration, and his compelling motive. And it is hardly too much to say that, among all those poets who, consciously or unconsciously, have followed in his footsteps, there is not one who has ever surpassed his standard in love lyrics.

He sang of the tenderness and faith and fervour of all lovers; the adoration of the Troubadour for the fair one who inspired his songs; the devotion of the lady to the knight who fought for her; the loves of goatherds and shepherdesses; the wooing of birds and flowers; the mating of nature; the passion of the elements; the eternal smile, sigh and sob of universal love. So is he well called the Singer of Love.

Nowhere in the world was it easier to fashion love-songs than in Limousin. If the speech of Picardy was silver, the speech of Provence was of molten gold. If the Châtelain de Coucy, whom we shall meet later, sang of the white blossomed spring, Bernart de Ventadorn was not only the celebrator, but the incarnation, of the rich Southern summer. Even in winter his temperament and fancy created a poetical summer. While the land was frozen and snow-encrusted he wrote one of his most delicious songs:

[1]"So filled with happiness am I
Earth wears another face;
Rich flowers of many a brilliant dye
For me the frost displace;
When rains descend and tempests fly
My joy but gains in grace,
They only help my song rise high
My glory mount apace;
For in my loving heart
So sweetly joy doth start,
Meseems the flowers make ice depart,
To verdure snow gives place!"

When Bernart was about twenty-three, and in the first flush of his genius as of his youth, the Vicomte Ebles took to wife the radiant Vicomtesse de Limoges. As a girl, the name of Margarida de Turenne was known far and wide as being significant of all beauty. As the young wife of Aimar IV., of Limoges, Margarida was considered even more marvellously lovely. When the Vicomte de Limoges died and left her a youthful and charming widow, she wasted no undue time in regrets. Mock mourning was unpleasant to her lightly emotional nature, and she had not loved her husband so well as to have difficulty in finding consolation. Within a year of his death she married Ebles de Ventadorn. She was many years younger than he, and as fascinating as she was weak and frivolous. To Ventadour she came like a gorgeous flower, a re-

[1]Translation by Justin H. Smith.

splendid jewel, or rare and many-hued bird. And one and all bowed down before her brilliant, vanquishing beauty, and adored the tips of her embroidered shoes.

First and greatest among her conquests was the young Troubadour of her husband's court, Bernart the Singer.

In Margarida he found the ideal of all his songs and all his dreams. He had sung of love,—here was Love personified of which to sing. He worshipped beauty,—where could a man find beauty such as this? He adored romance,—here was Romance come to earth in the guise of a lovely woman. Margarida was not only beautiful, she had wit of a valueless, sparkling order, and, as her nature was easily stirred and superficially poetic, it is small wonder that she captivated the young minstrel. He made songs for her by day and night, songs that were iridescent with sentiments and visions, and charming with whimsical fancies,—songs that caused the Vicomte Ebles to applaud with frank delight, and that moved the heart of the lady with gratified vanity and pleasurable excitement.

Her beauty, we are told, was of the sort to strike men dumb. To Bernart, however, it gave a new and more melodious utterance. He called her "*Bel Vezer* (Fair-To-See)." So was she mentioned in his songs, and so did he call her softly in speaking to his own heart.

[1]"It is no wonder if I sing
A better song than all the rest,—"

he wrote one day:

"For Love is mightier in my breast,
My life a fitter offering;
For heart and body,
Mind and sense,
Are given to Love, and all my might;
Nor can I turn to left or right
The rein toward Love is drawn so tense!"

It was in the same song that he made jesting protest against his lady's hard heart:

"You're neither bear nor lion—*quite*,
To kill me, if I cease defence?"

Bernart, says Fauriel, possessed "a fine ear, a sweet voice, a lively and delicate imagination." And one historian declares that he had the three qualifications for winning affection which are so explicitly stated by Blondel the Minstrel: "Sincere love, generosity, and a courtly speech." We also learn from many sources that he was of goodly presence, though not tall, and that he was graced with dark, penetrating and very beautiful eyes, a charming smile and a magnetic personality. He dressed with the extreme care and the eye to the artistic which was affected by the great Troubadours of the day, and had notably good man-

[1]Translated by Justin H. Smith.

ners, even in that ceremonious period. Whatever he attempted he did well: he rode superbly, and acquitted himself with grace and skill in passages of arms. Nevertheless, while possessing ample courage and manliness, and being an acknowledged favourite among his fellows, he was, as he admitted frankly, happiest at a lady's feet!

It is not hard to picture Bernart and Margarida together golden hour by golden hour; the Troubadour playing upon his harp and singing his wonderful love-songs, as the heavy breath of crowding roses surged in through the open casement, and the warm Provençal winds caressed the hair and face of the Vicomtesse. It was a beautiful dream to Bernart; and perhaps Margarida herself, in all her gay and wilful life, had never known such high and genuine feeling. But the idyll was brief, as were most things in Provence. Pain and joy, love and death, reached their bloom swiftly, there in the South; and nothing endured longer than the roses.

One day, under that big pine-tree that shadowed the garden of Ventadour, Bernart sank on his knee at Margarida's feet, and began to sing. He was inspired as never before, and his melody was as exquisite as it was new-born and fresh. So touched she was, so stirred, so moved, so impressed by the loveliness of the strain, that she bent above him as he knelt at her feet, and kissed him without a word.

Whether or not the Vicomte Ebles saw the kiss, or whether some prying servitor told him of it, is not recorded. But in some manner he knew of it, and, shocked out of his honourable and generous confidence, he decided to put an end to the musical and poetical romance going on in Ventadour.

He led his Vicomtesse to her apartments in the donjon tower, left her there with her women, and locked her in securely. "Then," says an ancient chronicler, "he made himself a stranger to Bernart." That he did not banish him from the Court is proof of his generous nature and the love he bore the young Troubadour.

Bernart was profoundly miserable. His benefactor's attitude was so bitter a reproach to his thoughtless, romantic nature, that he could hardly endure to remain longer at Ventadour. But he was convinced that his beautiful lady was grieving for his songs, and so remained to write her countless poetical effusions, which he sent her by a secret messenger, and even sang to her softly in the shadow of the donjon tower. But Margarida never even looked from her window to thank him. Finally the secret messenger brought him a message:

"The Lady Margarida desired that he should depart and go away from all that region, and come not back to it any more."

This curt and unsympathetic response to his song-

making opened Bernart's eyes at last, and he saw that the Vicomtesse had simply cared for him and his songs while they entertained and did not inconvenience her. Moreover, rumours reached him that Margarida had been much more interested in the Sieur de Beaucaire, a distinguished noble who had visited the Castle, than in him.

In a mood of keen, if transient, unhappiness, the young Troubadour said good-bye to Ventadour, his lord, and his boyhood, and went away. He took his harp and his jongleurs,—the men who sang his songs when he was out of humour,—and lived the life of a wanderer for a time.

This is part of the song which he made out of his departure:

[1]"In vain at Ventadour full many a friend
Will seek me, for my lady doth refuse me,
And thither small my wish my way to wend,
If ever thus despitefully she use me.
On me she frowningly her brow doth bend,
For why? My love to her hath ne'er an end;
But of no other crime she can accuse me."

This song has an artificial ring except for two lines, wherein he seems to refer to his happiness in Ventadour:

". . . I send unto Provence great love and joy,
And greater joy than ever tongue expresseth. . . ."

[1]Translation by Ida Farnell.

So ends the first part of the story of Bernart de Ventadorn,—the part through which "Bel Vezer" smiled, frowned and coquetted. The tale was set down by the Trouvère Hugh (or "Uc") de Saint Circ, who says:

". . . And this that I, Hugh of Saint Circ, have written of him, did the Viscount Ebles, of Ventadour, relate to me; son of the Viscountess that Sir Bernart loved."

Margarida and her husband never were reconciled. She had small power of affection, either for him or for their small son, the "Viscount Ebles," referred to by Saint Circ. She was tired of her husband, and he was bitterly disappointed in her, and a separation was soon obtained. Margarida married Guilhelm IV., Count of Angoulême, without the slightest delay, and continued to be known as one of the most beautiful women of her day. Her loveliness added lustre to four ancient names: Turenne, Limoges, Ventadorn and Angoulême. As one writer says, in all simplicity: "She must have been very attractive!"

Ebles, whose nature was too deep to permit of consolation, and who had now lost not only his wife, but Bernart, whom he loved as a brother, left Ventadour forever. He, like Bernart, could no longer bear the sad and sweet memories connected with the place, and he travelled far and wide, striving to forget. But while Bernart was comforted speedily by his two gods,

Song and Love, the Vicomte failed to find forgetfulness or consolation. So he journeyed to Monte Cassino, in Italy, became a monk in an austere Order, and never was heard of any more.

For three years Bernart wandered about, growing older, but, it is to be feared, hardly wiser. At the end of that time he found himself in that enchanting, brilliant and dangerous place, the Court of Normandy. Says Rowbotham, the historian, "Normandy was an ever-open asylum to the unfortunate in love and the fortunate in war."

When Bernart arrived at Court his second patron had just brought home his bride. This time both patron and bride were of exalted station,—no petty count and countess but a future king and a divorced queen! Henry of Anjou, later Henry II., of England, was at that time Duke of Normandy, and reigned over all the province. His son was one day to be known by all the world as Cœur de Lion, but at the time of which I speak, Henry was himself a mere boy in years, younger as a matter of fact than our Bernart. Yet he was not too young to be wayward and obstinate and overbearing; and so it happened that of all the royal women of the world he chose Queen Eleanor for his wife!

Born Duchess of Aquitaine, she had been for a brief restless season Queen of France, and consort of "the priestly king," Louis VII. She had

despised Louis and had married young Prince Henry because, as she asserted, "she wanted a man, not a monk, for a husband!" She it was who had gone with the Crusaders into Palestine, making coats of mail the fashion for great ladies. And she it was who presided at the fantastic Courts of Love of the day. She kept herself steadily before the public gaze,—not from vanity, like Bel Vezer, but from a love of power and of adventure. She was as imposing as Margarida was appealing and charming, and of the two it is admitted that the Queen was the more beautiful. In March she bade farewell to her royal "Monk," and immediately married Henry Plantagenet. He brought her home to Normandy, his bride and Princess, soon to be his Queen; and great were the festivities in honour of that bridal.

Eleanor flung herself heart and soul into the spirit of gaiety. She was glad to be free from Louis, for, while she did not love Henry overmuch, she loved him better than the French King. And her passion for power thrilled her with triumph in that it would be but for a brief season, after all, that she would not wear a crown.

To Bernart, still moodily though fitfully mourning his lost Bel Vezer, came the vision of this magnificent young Duchess, like the sun between clouds. When he saw her, the last lingering flames of his foolish and infatuated sentiment for Margarida paled before the

clear light of a genuine admiration. He appointed himself Knight and Troubadour to Her Highness without delay, and set himself to compose a fresh and more brilliant order of songs for her superior judgment.

Margarida had been lovely as a gay flower; this woman had the beauty of the moon and stars; or so he thought. Margarida had possessed charm; Eleanor had the magnetism of a deep and rare personality. The Vicomtesse had had a gracious wit; the Duchess had an intellect of unusual strength and keenness. Bel Vezer had carried with her an atmosphere of artificial romance and perfumed sentiment; this woman, who had been and would again be a Queen, seemed forever surrounded by a grandeur of emotion which had in it pride and wildness, dignity and abandon. Margarida's spirit was as small as her dainty frame; Eleanor, body and soul, was large, strong and beautiful.

Says the Prior of Vigeois: "The Duchess of Normandy was illustrious and much admired, and well versed in matters of fame and honour, and knew how to award praise." She had too much discernment not to appreciate Bernart's gifts, and readily permitted him to sing her praises before the world. So it came about that Bernart took far more pains with his songs than ever he had in the old days. Bel Vezer had only recognised the sweet and entertaining quality of his work. The Princess Eleanor had a fine knowledge of music and letters, and her brain as well as her heart re-

sponded to her Troubadour's songs. It is to Eleanor, therefore, that we owe Bernart's loveliest lyrics. To her was written that chanson in which he managed to breathe the spirit of the skylarks that had soared and sung above the gardens of Ventadour through his golden boyhood,—which we call the Lark Song:

[1]"When I behold on eager wing
The skylark soaring to the sun
Till, e'en with rapture faltering,
He sinks in glad oblivion,
Alas, how fain to seek were I
The same ecstatic fate of fire!
Yea, of a truth I know not why
My heart melts not with its desire! . . ."

The Court of Love over which the Duchess Eleanor presided was a strange institution, one of the strangest facts of mediæval times. An "amorous legislature" was established, and there were thirty-two Laws of Love, which were carefully observed and strictly enforced! Most of these laws were the outcome of judgment delivered in various cases before the Courts of Love.

A number of ladies of Normandy, presided over by Eleanor, sat in judgment and heard the pleas and defences of all the lovers of the country-side. They settled sentimental quarrels, brought persons together, and parted those who were unsuited to one another. Some of the cases strike modern minds as being particu-

[1]Translation by Harriet W. Preston.

larly amusing. One lady brought against her lover the complaint that he was careless as to dress, dishevelled as to hair, and melancholy as to conversation. The court decided against her, giving as a judgment the unanimous statement that being in love always affected men thus!

Out of the decrees of the Court were built up the Thirty-two Laws of Love. The laws are of the order of this sample:

"Every action of a lover must terminate with the thought of the loved one."

And this:

"Nothing prevents one lady being loved by two gentlemen, or one gentleman by two ladies. . . .!"

Certainly it was fitting that an era so given over to the god Eros should have produced the greatest of all Singers of Love.

The Princess was but little older than her Troubadour, and their companionship was very perfect. Both rarely gifted, they understood each other, and were excellent friends, all romance apart. In those days, as we all know, every great lady had her minstrel, and Eleanor was glad to have as a Trouvère so great a master as Bernart de Ventadorn. "Azimar" and "Conort" were the two names by which Eleanor is called in Bernart's songs. The reason for this is unknown save to their two ghosts wherever they may be.

However, that brilliant period at the Norman Court was but a short one. The year after his marriage Henry succeeded to the throne of England. He sailed away to claim his kingdom, and, either by way of compliment or irony, took Bernart with him! The Troubadour, however, did not stay long. The first ship available carried him back to Normandy and Eleanor. But she by this time was more interested in her coming coronation than in minstrelsy, and Bernart found himself of less importance at Court than heretofore. At Christmas King Henry returned for his Queen. The Court was broken up, the ladies of the Tribunal of Love settled down in their neighbouring castles, the royal effects were packed, and the royal couple went their ways to rule over their new kingdom.

Bernart was left behind. A whisper there was of his being summoned later, but days, months, and years passed without a message from England. Their new duties filled the minds of the King and Queen, and if Eleanor sometimes gave a thought to the Troubadour Henry certainly did not.

One day Bernart sent the Queen a letter. In it he said: "Across the sea before the coming winter will I come from Normandy to England; for I am both a Norman and an Englishman now." But he received no answer from his lady.

Nevertheless, when, after four years of waiting,

Bernart presented himself at the English Court, he was most graciously received, and was installed as Poet Laureate.

But though his adoration for the Queen had prompted Bernart to declare that he was now English since she had become so, he found the British Court a strange, sad place, and hungered for other and warmer lands. Moreover, the old sympathy and understanding between himself and Eleanor seemed to have failed and faded. So he bade his patrons a respectful and rather sorrowful farewell, and with his harp under his arm sailed away from England.

Once more he became a wanderer. Wishing experience in warfare perhaps, he took service under Raymond V., called "The Good Count of Toulouse," perhaps because other Counts of Toulouse have been so peculiarly wicked. At the Count's Castle he met many of the most brilliant men of his day: Pierre Vidal, that graceful jester in rhyme; Pierre Rogier, the courtly scholar; Folquet of Marseilles, the melancholy and fanciful dreamer; the hot-blooded and debonnair Raimon de Miraval, and many others.

Bernart distinguished himself in the play of wits and in the use of arms, but as ever it was not war nor laughter, but love which formed the burden of his songs. He grew to know Ermengarde de Narbonne, she to whom Pierre Rogier's finished and scholarly

poems were addressed. She was a noble and intellectual lady, though utterly lacking in beauty, and a power in the cultivated world. Indeed she was the New Woman of the day. Bernart liked and admired her, and wrote for her several songs. There were, too, many other women to whom he devoted himself, poetically speaking. But Bernart no longer gave his devotion with his songs. That was over. His heart had first been charmed by Margarida de Ventadorn. All the real love of his life had been given to Queen Eleanor. Therein was comprised the romance of Bernart the Singer.

He made charming love songs afterward, it is true; but he no longer poured his life-blood into his stanzas,—no longer wrote his music in time to the throbs of his heart.

He lived chiefly with his golden memories, and their light served to inspire him in more glowing fashion than any enchantments of newer loves. For many years he sang, under radiant suns and mist-veiled moons, mingling his rhymes with brooks and forest whispers, and his music with the songs of larks and nightingales. For many years he drank life as though it were wine of a rare vintage,—eagerly yet lingeringly. He drank each moment to the dregs, complaining of no bitterness when he reached them, and fronting the morrow with the warm sweet cheer with which he treasured the past. For many years he voiced the

varied aspects and phases of romance in verse and melody, uplifting the lyric strain of love above the change of seasons and the clamour of wars.

And suddenly—he was old, and began to feel the chill of twilight creeping over the warm human sunshine of his life. Whereupon he smiled, and put away his harp. And he travelled back to Provence, and knocked on the postern-door of the Monastery of Dalon. They took him in, the good wise monks of that quiet Cistercian Abbey, and he put on the robe of the Order, and murmured *Aves* among the solemn shadows. As a boy he had hated the monastic restrictions and seclusion; in his old age he found the life and the atmosphere most restful and comforting.

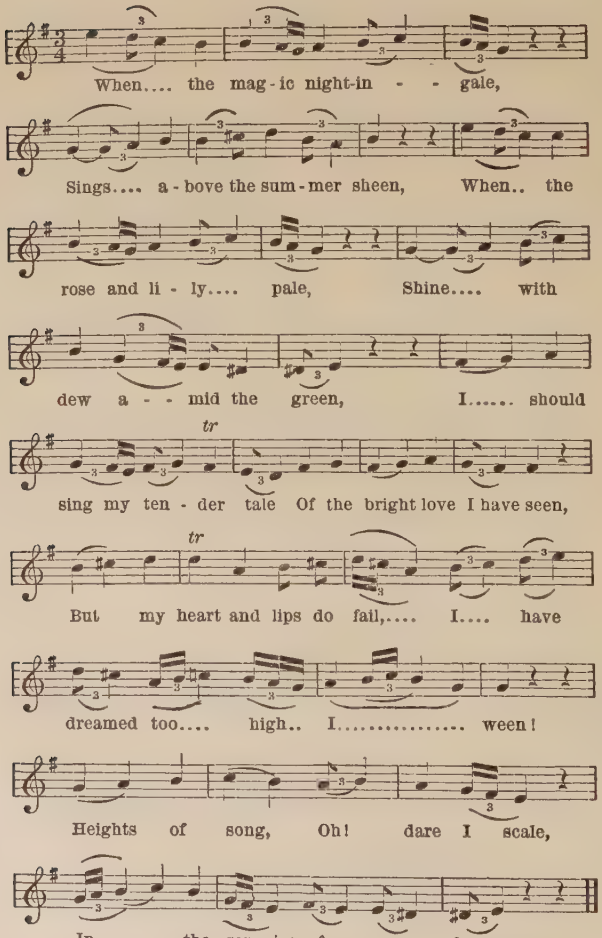
Moreover, between Matins and Vespers there were a thousand moments wherein one could remember one's rose-red youth, and in one's secret soul make love-songs,—never to be sung!

And finally, one summer day, smiling softly over his crowding dreams, he slipped away into some Ghost World where he could sing with the golden, forgotten voice of his youth.

But alas! This earth knows him no longer. Not even in Provence, where the skylarks sing out their souls against the sun, may one find him,—Bernart le Chanteur, the Singer of Love.

IN PRAISE OF THE LADY OF FAYEL

NIGHTINGALE SONG


When.... the mag-ic night-in - - gale,
Sings.... a-bove the sum-mer sheen, When.. the
rose and li - ly.... pale, Shine.... with
dew a - - mid the green, I..... should
tr
sing my ten - der tale Of the bright love I have seen,
tr
But my heart and lips do fail,.... I.... have
dreamed too.... high.. I..... ween!
Heights of song, Oh! dare I scale,
In..... the ser-vice of.... my Queen!

II

IN PRAISE OF THE LADY OF FAYEL

"Songs of leaves and budding flowers,
Dewy wood and shining plain,
Are but songs of idle hours,
If Love claim not each refrain.
He who seeks a tender strain,
Yet from her sweet praise abstain,
Gaineth not the Springtime's dowers,
Sighs with but a phantom pain."

Thus in the old-world days, in the fragrant lute-haunted twilight of the twelfth century, sang one Regnault de Coucy, Châtelain of the splendid old Castle that bears his ancient and honoured name to this day. It stands there, in sweet, romantic Picardy, not far from Laon and from Noyon, its superb walls crumbling, its spacious rooms bare and deserted, and glowers forbiddingly across its moat at impertinent travellers. Magnificent in its ruin, it has no part in the world of to-day, but talks dumbly of feudal centuries that are dead.

There is a village there, too, that bears the name of the Castle. Were they vassals,—they who lived there in the days of Regnault, the Châtelain?

Those were days the record whereof is so faintly, delicately writ upon historic pages that the reader must perforce turn away with dimmed and bewildered eyes,—able to grasp but little concerning what these strangely pranked and panoplied people actually did, but breathing deeply the indefinable, vaporous perfume of their mysteriously charming lines. In poring over the old books something steals out across the pages,—the echo of a Troubadour's lute, or the scent of the red rose the Lady of Fayel wore in her gold hair,—a tapestry-like colouring, a mailèd shimmer, a melody, quaint and sad, such as might have accompanied some weary jongleur from Court to Court.

Doubtless they did not only live pictures and music, those mediæval folk, but certain it is that it is only the pictures and music that have come down to us. The vision and the dream remain, fresh and wonderful;—the rest has slipped away into the kindly obscurity of the dead years.

We read that Regnault de Coucy was a valorous and accomplished knight, having a pretty skill with the sword and lance in a tourney. And whether we will or no, we see the glittering lists with the armoured warriors and eager dames, and our ears catch the clangour of good steel soundly struck.

And when we read the verses of the courtly Châtelain (those verses which dear Dr. Burney says are "some

of the most elegant and afflicting songs in the French language"!)—and when we hum over to ourselves the odd, sweet melodies to which they were set—what then? We see the Troubadour's handsome face bent above his lute, and the fair, proud head of his Lady sunk upon that wonderful white hand of which he has written so tenderly,—her gracious spirit given up to the dreams evoked by his music.

"Nay!" writes the Châtelain de Coucy. "Never shall mine eyes be satisfied with gazing upon her sweet and tender face, her white hands, her long and slender fingers of which the very sight lights the fires of adoration, . . . the blonde brightness of her hair. The variously beautiful things that shine separately and fitly in other women are all united in her to render her completely perfect."

Somewhere between 1160 and 1180 Regnault de Coucy was born. The old historians are of many minds as to the exact dates both of his birth and his death, but a compromise between disagreeing authorities suggests, approximately, 1170 for his birth, and 1200 for his death. This, according to comparatively authentic records, would necessitate his having become Châtelain de Coucy at the tender age of sixteen,—1186,—but this is possible. He is said to have taken part in the Third Crusade, which was in 1189-91, but the Abbé de la Rue insists that he did not reach Palestine until 1197. It is certain that he was

killed about the time that the thirteenth century was born. Of necessity the chronicles of that remote day are something vague and contradictory, so let us waive more complete exactitude, contenting ourselves with noting the life—too brief,—and the songs,—too few,—of that most courtly and gifted young Troubadour, Regnault de Coucy.

The house of Coucy was an ancient and noble one. The Sire Raoul, Regnault's uncle,—has a prominent place in twelfth century history, and there are those who insist that he too was a Troubadour, if not, indeed, the author of the famous Coucy *chansons* themselves! And other branches of the family were worthy of note. A certain young cousin of Regnault's, Raoul de Malvoisin, won renown as a Troubadour, and is spoken of with honour in many books that make no mention of our Châtelain. The Coucy house had long been a power in the Kingdom. Not so very many years before, King Louis the Fat had taken sides with one of Regnault's ancestors against a kinsman, and the traditions of the family were of high nobility. So we see that our young hero grew up in an atmosphere of greatness. It was almost a foregone conclusion that he should do something of note in the world. He was a feudal lord, King Philippe Auguste's faithful servant, and Castellan of a great castle. In early youth he was taught, in addition to the usual complement of courtly and knightly accomplishments, the gentle art

of the Troubadours. He had his own jongleurs and gleemen to sing his melodies, and, moreover, possessed a personal aptitude for singing and for instrumental music, playing with ease and grace upon the various instruments popular in the Courts of that day.

Just what those instruments were it is difficult to say, but there are in existence old English manuscripts in which certain professional minstrels enumerate the instruments upon which they can play. Here is a list of a few of those mentioned: The lute, the violin, the pipe, the syrinx, the trumpet, the trumpet-marine, the harp, the vielle, the bagpipe, the gigue, the gittern, the symphony, the psaltery, the organistrum, the taber, the rote, the flageolet, the sack-but, the rebeck, the regal, and the set of bells. One picturesque jongleur writes: "I can play the shawlm, the timbrel, the cymbales, the Spanish penola that is struck with a quill, the organistrum that a wheel turns around, the wait so delightful, the rebeck so enchanting, the little gigue that chirps up high, and the great big hornlike thunder!"

There was also an instrument called the chrotta, but no one seems to have the slightest idea what it was like. I decline to believe that Regnault ever played the chrotta, or, indeed, most of the other strange things just mentioned. They were reserved for professionals, while the high-born Troubadours contented themselves with the poetic lute, vielle and harp. You must know,

by the bye, that a jongleur, or paid musician, held a most unenviable position in those days.

Quoth a gay lady of her attendant knight, on some brocade-carpeted, rose-scented terrace: "Which would you rather be,—a jongleur or a robber?"

To which he, splendid in satin and shining mail, replied merrily: "A robber!"

And they laughed together, while the poor jongleur who had given rise to the jest, sat before them, labouring painstakingly to give them pleasure, with the aid of his gigue, or his set of bells, or perhaps,—who knows?—his mysterious chrotta!

Not only was Regnault de Coucy a great Troubadour,—one as it chanced beloved of the gods and gifted with Apollo's own gift of song, but he was a courtly knight, a radiantly handsome gallant, and an iron-armed lance-bearer in the lists. He was also eternally gay and eternally generous, although, in spite of the grandeur of his name, he had but little wealth. Perhaps the brave Sire Raoul had already squandered it, or perhaps Regnault himself was one of those with whom money likes not to abide too long; certain it is that he was forever out of pocket,—but forever kindly, forever brave, and forever bursting into song as irrepressible and as spontaneous as that of a wood-bird. In an old English poem they call him the "Knight of Courtesy," and all the historians have a word of tribute. But there is one gracious old

romancer whose pen seems to have been dipped in pure love for and comprehension of the Châtelain. This delightful poet has signed no name to his tale of the Troubadour and his Lady, explaining in quaintest French, that his identity would be of no interest to the world at large, only to the "gracious and amiable lady" for whom he has worked. "I shall be well recompensed," he writes, "if she accept my homage. I consecrate myself to her service, for she makes all my felicity, and I shall maintain myself in joy to serve her so long as I may be alive."

To this charming unknown, who wrote in the thirteenth century, we owe the only coherent, if idealised, account of the Châtelain's devotion to the Lady of Fayel, and to him, too, this brief but sufficient tribute to our hero's good qualities:

"He was handsome, lovable and gallant, and he was full of wit. He had not great wealth, but for honour, courage, and a ready skill with arms, not Gawain nor Launcelot could surpass him."

The Castle where Regnault de Coucy lived was noticeably splendid even in those days of impressive feudal piles. It was perfectly constructed for warfare and defence, being accessible from but one side. Its fortress was most imposing, its moat was deep and broad, its walls were lofty, and its donjons all that donjons should be. Four great towers rose sharp against the blue sky of Picardy, and guarded the cen-

tral donjon keep, which was two hundred and ten feet high, and one hundred feet in diameter. The Castle covered ten thousand square yards, and its walls were thirty-four inches thick. This rough description gives a vague idea of our Regnault's home.

Here he passed the lengthy and gloomy winter months, practising feats of strength and exercise in weapons, and, accompanied by his attentive jongleurs, composing his delicate songs. Here, among the dim shadows, shut in by the winter cold and the great walls of his lonely Castle, his fugitive rose and silver fancies came to him in frailest but most exquisite shape,—elusive melodies and wonderful rhymes, to be moulded together in fitting form, against the coming of the headlong spring. This was in Northern France, where the spring came later but more thrillingly than in langorous Provence. When the river Aisne tumbled with a sharper cadence, and the first flowers speared the melting and softening earth, the quicksilver of the season would run through the veins of the young Castellan.

Then he called his men-at-arms and musicians, and, with head uplifted to catch the full tang and savour of the new time, and pulses bounding even as last year's leaves bounded beneath the riotious wind, he rode abroad, singing the songs of his making.

"For the springtime," cried aloud the Châtelain de

Coucy,—"and the month of May,—and the violet,—and the nightingale,—all invite me to sing!"

From castle to castle rode the Knight-Troubadours in spring. Everywhere they were greeted with an eager welcome, for their art was dearly prized. Everywhere there were festivities to do them honour, for almost all were noble by rank and birth. And when they wished to pay a particularly marked compliment in return, they would push their jongleurs aside, and, taking lute or harp, would sing their own songs for the pleasure of the lord or lady they were visiting.

As we know, it was the custom for every Troubadour to single out some great lady for his special allegiance. To her all his songs were addressed, and her colours were carried by him in every tourney he chanced to enter. But for many years Regnault sang only to an imaginary Queen of Hearts,—a lady sketched in mist and moonbeams, but fairer, he vowed, than ever mortal woman could be. Then, during one of his early spring flights, he saw,—suddenly and briefly as one sees a star between fast-moving clouds,—a face. It was a fair and delicate face with smiling lips, but with the pride of sadness in the deep blue eyes,—a face framed in a mist of sun-coloured hair. From that moment his dream-lady was gone,—or rather his dream-lady had become real, and, with loyalty and good cheer, as became a brave knight and

true, he henceforth sang the praise of the Lady of Fayel.

Her name was Gabrielle, and she was a daughter of the fine old family of De Vergy. As a very young girl she had married the grim Chevalier Aubert de Fayel, a neighbour of Regnault's. She lived there, year by year, in the Castle of Fayel, a quiet, sweet lady, most lovable and gentle,—a faithful wife, and a sedately merry companion;—a little staid, probably, in all her moods, as though fearing to dare too careless a joy, a little sad always, as though weighted down by too many dreams and fancies. It is said that she was so lovely that all eyes softened on beholding her. One old poet declares that her "virtue, gentleness, chastity, amiability, and beauty made her beloved of all men."

As to this beauty of hers, it is naturally from Coucy himself that we have the most individual and vivid descriptions of her.

". . . Her face is charming, the face of a young girl, . . . her mouth is fresh as a flower. . . . Her arms are beautiful, her throat fair and stately,—her figure is supreme grace. . . . Her wonderful blue eyes are clear and sparkling, yet my Lady is all pride. . . . In her cheeks bloom, day by day, sweet roses and lilies. . . ."

In that beautiful and poetic letter into which the old romancer put a distilled essence of all of Coucy's loveliest songs we find:

"Your heart, most sweet lady, is like the purest gold without flaw. . . . You are a diamond,—a sapphire,—a red rose. . . . You are all that is beautiful and good. . . . You lead man to glory, and you are to him a fountain of divinest pity. Dear and beautiful lady, most charming and most noble of women, you have all my heart and my service."

Having seen Gabrielle de Fayel, Coucy most naturally presented himself at her Castle before the spring grew old.

The same old romancer-historian describes the first meeting in flowery terms. We gather that the Lady of Fayel stood among her women, dressed in a rose-red gown—"neither too gay in colour, nor yet too pale," —with a band of gold upon her fair hair, and that she bowed with grace and gravity. The Châtelain bent low before her, then, lifting his head, he cried in ringing tones the wonderful old salutation: "*Dieu vous donne le bonjour!* (God give you happiness!)"

Near her perhaps stood the Demoiselle Isabelle, a cousin of Gabrielle's, and her chief lady-in-waiting. A fair maid and a loyal was Isabelle, who loved her kinswoman and lady with her whole heart, and comforted her much in the days of sorrow and anxiety which were to come. And surely, on that spring day, the brave esquire Gobert stood not far away. He was in Aubert de Fayel's service, but loved his gentle lady bet-

ter than his grim lord, and, later, gave his whole allegiance to the Châtelain because he sang the praises of Gabrielle, and brought pleasure into her life.

Coucy himself, according to the custom of the time, must have been magnificent in the full armour and rich cloak that became his rank. His horse, too,—surely the beast gleamed with golden trappings! For, be it known, in those days, whatever the size of his purse, a high-born Troubadour must ride almost as finely caparisoned as a king.

I think that it was among the first days of their new friendship that Regnault composed his little masterpiece, his "*Quaint li louseignolz*,"—which will live always among the gems of pure lyric song, despite its quaint and mediæval character:

"When the magic nightingale
Sings above the summer sheen,
When the rose and lily pale
Shine with dew amid the green,—
I should sing my fervent tale
Of the bright love I have seen,
But mine eyes and lips do fail,—
I have dreamed too high, I ween!
Heights of song,—ah! dare I scale
In the service of my Queen?

"Maddest tellers of a tale
Are my wilful eyes, I ween!
I may strive without avail
To disguise the lovers' mien.
Ah! so often have they seen

You before whom sunsets pale
That the heights I dared not scale
They have leaped with love, my queen!
Eyes, with moon-struck folly wild,
You are pardoned: for—she smiled!"

The Chevalier Aubert de Fayel was a silent, taciturn man, just and brave in his own way, and not too narrow in mind,—but his heart lacked freedom and generosity, and he had forgotten, if he had ever known, the romance and buoyancy of youth. From the beginning the admiration which perforce he gave the young Troubadour was of a grudging nature. He could not understand the pure and idealistic adoration which Regnault felt for Gabrielle, nor the gracious friendship which she granted him, and his gentle songs irritated the wingless soul which could neither fly to their poetic heights, nor fathom their delicate sweetness.

When Regnault sang among the dewy garden-spaces of Fayel, at twilight, and the Lady listened, her heart moved to all manner of soft and gracious fancies; when Isabelle, too, dreamed, and the other women forgot to chatter; when Gobert stood spellbound, and the birds ceased singing to listen,—the Chevalier moved apart, plunged in gloom. He hated the man whom the gods had so lovingly dowered, and he was growing more and more jealous of his poetic devotion to Gabrielle.

The Châtelain had a thousand quaint conceits and whimsical ways, and his delight was to bring a smile

into his Lady's deep eyes. Sometimes he played out miniature dramas, pretending that he was a condemned prisoner, and praying her to soften his sentence. At such times he sang quickly improvised and lightly wayward songs, as graceful as they were quaint, and she listened with a happy pride in his skill, and a pleasure in his gentle merriment.

"Ah, sweet it is to me to breathe the savour
Of these, the dear new days that waft the spring—"

sang the Châtelain softly, as he touched his lute among the garden shadows:

"The woods and fields with faint bright mists a-waver,
The fresh, green grass with rose-pink garnishing!
But I, alas! with all the season's favour
Still kneel before my lady proud and fair,
Whose word sweet death or sweeter life may bring,
And join my hands in broken, yearning prayer.
Give life—give death! I pray.—Yet still I sing:
Since both in life and death song makes man braver!"

He only visited Fayel occasionally. He had his own gloomy Castle to heed, his own men-at-arms and village-folk to care for, and plenty of tourneys in which to defend the honour of the house of Coucy, and to bear the colours of the Lady Gabrielle. Of his visits to his Lady during the year we know little, but certain it is that no spring ever blossomed without finding him at her Castle gate, or without hearing new songs in her honour. For until he died she was the

star of whose brightness he sang without ceasing, with all the tender sadness and rapturous pain of the born poet.

But the Chevalier de Fayel, as time passed, grew more and more bitter in his dislike of the Troubadour. And at last his wife came to grieve because of this, and found no more joy in the companionship of her young Knight. So Regnault determined suddenly to disappear from Picardy, and to continue his worship of his Lady under distant skies.

In those days when Knights made a great success or a great failure of life they took the cross and went to fight the Saracens in Palestine. Regnault was poorer than ever, and by this time even his marvellous spirits were growing weary. There was nothing to keep him in France, as his homage was a source of sorrow to his beloved Lady, so, together with his uncle, the Sire Raoul, and his young cousin, Raoul de Malvoisin, he took service under Richard Cœur de Lion, during, probably, the Third Crusade.

He paid a farewell visit to Gabrielle, and promised her his eternal devotion and service. And she was filled with sadness at the thought of parting from her poet. She said that he must wear her colours in Palestine, and he assured her that he would always do so. Had he not borne them with honour in many a great tourney in France? But this was a different occasion, and, dissatisfied with the simple scarf he

treasured, she took a dagger and cut off great shining lengths of her own golden hair. This she braided into a bright net, and ornamented it with great pearls of price, and she gave it to him with a prayer for his safety, and her own sweet, fleeting, half-sorrowful smile for his adoring memory.

Coucy fastened the golden net to his helmet, and never again went into battle without its shimmering glory for a plume.

With a gay word of courage and good cheer, he took leave of his Lady, and rode gallantly away from Fayel, from Picardy, and from France forever.

A poet of the Middle Ages once wrote a poem on Gabrielle's thoughts of Coucy during the Wars of the Cross. The following is an excerpt from it:

"And when the soft winds, ever faintly sighing,
Steal inward from that far and desolate place
Where he may now be fighting, even dying,
Unto that side I turn my eager face.
And then it seems, my fancy fired o'ermuch,
On my grey cloak I feel his passing touch.
Lord God! when with the cross they cry, 'Make way!'
Succour one pilgrim in that bitter fight,—
He for whose soul and life I purely pray:
God—from the Saracens protect my Knight!"

Coucy dreamed much of Gabrielle during his travels and battles, and cherished a secret hope that stories of his brave deeds might drift back to Picardy, and in time reach her ears. The old chroniclers make much

of his exploits, and in their apparent pride in him, and delight in his prowess, have piled fancy upon fact. Among other achievements they mention, in all seriousness, his battle with a fierce and dangerous dragon, and his easy conquest of that demoniac beast!

But putting all legendary embellishment aside, it is certain that Regnault de Coucy acquitted himself superbly during the wars in the Holy Land. He was well-loved by King Richard, and fought beside him in many of his most violent battles. It was at Acre,—that memorable and historic carnage-time,—that all three kinsmen were killed by the Saracens: the old Sire Raoul, young Malvoisin, and our Châtelain Regnault.

A poisoned arrow pierced his side, and Gobert,—who had left the Chevalier de Fayel to follow his fortunes, and loved him better than all the world,—was forced to tell him that there was no hope for life. The Châtelain lay under the hot Eastern sun, and thought for a space, and then he called to him once more his faithful attendants, Gobert and also Hideux, the humblest of his servants, but not the least devoted,—and gave them his dying commands.

He bade them,—when he should be dead, take out his heart and place it, together with the net of golden hair, in a jewelled casket. That casket, he declared, they must carry back to France and place in the hands of the Lady of Fayel.

The old historians avow that he wrote a letter to go with it, in which he said:

"Lady, I send you my heart, for it is yours, and belongs to you by right. And, Lady, it is my joy to have you know that I die as I have lived, your man, your servant, and your Knight."

When he had finished his directions the Châtelain whispered brokenly: "Gobert,—carry—my—farewells—to—my—Lady—," and closed his eyes. The hot blue sky of Palestine burned splendidly on, and all around were the dead and dying Crusaders who had carried the Cross in the Siege of Acre.

Gobert and Hideux, faithful to the least wish of their dead master, carried out his instructions to the letter. Regnault was buried in the Holy Land, but his heart was carried home to Picardy, resting in the jewelled casket with the net that was made of Gabrielle's yellow hair.

Meanwhile the Chevalier de Fayel grew ever more and more morose and suspicious. His wife's frank sadness over the dangers to which the Troubadour was exposed enraged him, and that most gentle lady led a bitter life during the years of the Third Crusade. Nevertheless, she was always loyal and courageous, and tried to please her lord in all things.

Then came Gobert with worn and anxious face, moving secretly about the Castle garden, waiting for an opportunity to enter and present himself before the

Lady. He carried a jewelled casket, and with as much tenderness as though it were his own heart that lay within it.

The Chevalier de Fayel saw him, recognised the esquire who had left his service to enter that of the hated Troubadour, and stopped him. Gobert did his best to avert the Chevalier's suspicions, but was finally forced to give him the casket, and confess his errand.

In a fury over this last appeal to his wife's sympathies on the part of the dead Châtelain, Aubert determined upon a hideous punishment for her interest in the minstrel. He gave the casket to his cook, bidding him serve the heart that night at supper.

The dish was placed before Gabrielle, who, suspecting nothing, tasted it. Whereupon the Chevalier, unable to contain himself longer, cried out, with horrible triumph, that it was the heart of Regnault de Coucy.

When she understood the full ghastly truth, Gabrielle, with a quiet solemnity that frightened her husband, vowed that never again should food pass her lips.

She was helped to her apartments by her women, and never left them again, for she kept her vow and slowly starved herself to death.

She was so dearly loved that her women were in despair, and after a space even the Chevalier came to her side to beg her to live, and to earnestly pray her forgiveness.

This last she granted freely, saying that death was

too close to permit resentment, but no power could sway her from her determination. She lay, becoming ever paler, with the mystery of a new life growing in the sparkling blue eyes of which Regnault had written so adoringly.

And at last, with one of her Troubadour's songs haunting her failing memory, and perhaps the nightingale he had loved so well singing his broken heart out, among the dew-wet flowers of her garden, the Lady of Fayel died.

She was widely mourned, and it is stated that Aubert, the grim Chevalier, never smiled again in the few years that he survived her. The fate of Isabelle, of Gobert, and of Hideux we know not. It is certain that their time of mourning ended only with their lives.

So lived and died that brave and gallant Knight, Regnault, Châtelain de Coucy, and his high-born Lady, Gabrielle de Fayel.

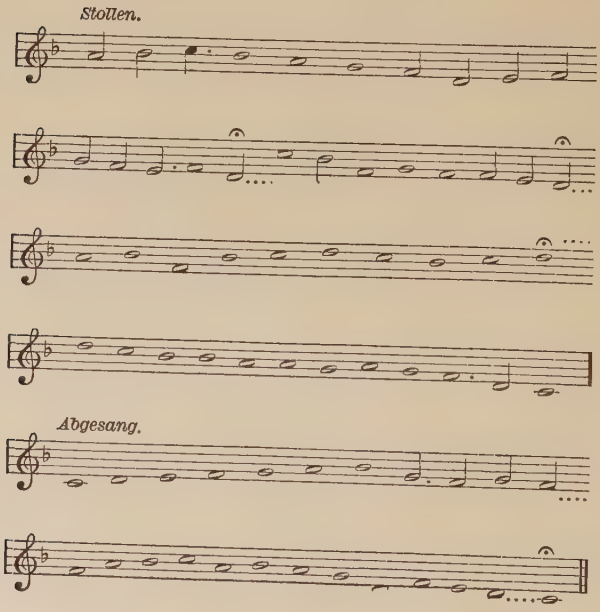
It is many years since they wandered among the spring flowers, heard the passionate nightingale, and dreamed day-dreams together,—many years since Regnault sang and Gabrielle listened,—many years since he fell asleep in Palestine and she in Picardy. But some memory of them remains, sweet and fragrant as meadows in May-time, or hedgerows under the moon. It is not only in the tomes and records that the Châtelain lives still,—it is in all the fresh growing things that come again each spring. At that season, so

beloved by him, his gentle and fearless ghost walks abroad, among the white pear-blossoms and silvering aspens, and sings again some *chanson* that came to him in that old-world time in Picardy:

"The wild, sweet nightingale forever singing
Both day and night, outpouring his sad heart,
Sings to my soul, strange solace softly bringing,
Till I, too, yearn to voice the wild-wood art.
So must I do, since every joy or smart
Doth pleasure her when turned to music ringing!
Bearing my lance, or my light lute new stringing,
I ask but to be of her life a part."

THE DREAMERS

AN AIR BY WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE



III

THE DREAMERS

THEY did not live and laugh like the singers of the South; they only dreamed, and touched their harp-strings gently, and sang grave, soft songs. And all their songs were in honour of pale, remote, lily-like women, and a love that was scarcely more than a graceful ghost of human passion. The grey-blue sky that topped the hills was not quieter nor more free from the fever-heats of this imperfect life than their music. For these were the Dreamers,—the Minnesinger of Germany.

It was their pride that they had purified themselves from all earthly desires or emotions, and that their hearts were clean alike of the bewilderments of error, and the turbulence of those world-calls that were prone to devastate soul and body if one should hearken to them. Not that they were monkish ascetics, nor unmanly cowards afraid of themselves and life, nor yet fanatics who mortified the flesh. They could tilt a lance with the hottest-headed Provençal or Spaniard who ever flung down a glove; and, dawning upon dawning, the woods echoed with the blast of their hunt-

ing-horns. Nay, they were no weaklings, these Minnesinger: only Dreamers.

A great struggle had been taking place in Germany between Paganism and Christianity, between the old material deities and the new spiritual God. Paganism, and evil, and yielding to the temptations of the earth, had all become bracketed together in the public mind. The Church stood for purity and honour and clean living, a romance that could be impersonal, and a chivalry that was far from gallantry. With the triumph of Christianity the revulsion of feeling in honest people's hearts caused a sudden convulsive exaggeration of idealism; all material elements were regarded with suspicion, and chivalry, knightliness, honour and love came to mean bloodless shadows from which the very life had been drained away. Such extremes are inevitable in all great movements for progress, and, following close upon the sensuous, warm-hued Paganism which had so nearly demoralised the country, the wave of reformation was bound to bring upon it an idealism as extravagant as the materialism which had been conquered. Upon this wave floated the bark of Song,—a new and etherialised song, belonging intrinsically to the time and the spirit thereof; and the bark was manned by the Minnesinger. The new cult demanded something better than honest humanity, something as white as the snow, and as pure as the stars. Which seems a strange and sad desire, since

man is made neither of chilled vapour nor starshine, but of red blood, and firm fibres, and swift pulses. But the Dreamers knew not that in their dreaming they were forgetting how to live.

And if you believe all this to be but a fanciful way of telling old tales, go you to the books that hold the verses and the melodies of the Minnesinger. You will find there many graceful lines and vague sweet airs, all threaded and crossed by cobwebs and shadows and trails of mist. For they were fashioned from visions and phantasies, and their makers were the Dreamers of Dreams.

Walther von der Vogelweide wrote a song on "Love" one day. Never was poet or songster yet who could keep away from the Universal Theme for long. We have seen how the South treated it. Mark you now, the way of the Dreamer:

[1]"Love is neither man nor woman,
Soul it hath not, nor yet body,
And no earthly sign nor token;
Though the tongue of man hath named it,
Never mortal eye hath seen it.
Yet without it can no creature
Win Heaven's pitying grace and favour;
Nor where Love is will there linger
Aught of fraud or baseness ever.
To the traitor, the false-hearted,
Love hath come not, cometh never."

The following poem by Heinrich von Morungen is

[1]Translation by Rev. Sir F. A. Gore Ousely.

one of the simplest and loveliest of the Dream Songs; as well as one of the most typical:

[1]"Faithful ever my heart's true emotion,
Yet Love's reward to me was pain and sorrow.
Ever since my childhood have I worshipped
Thine image fair, in true love still adoring.
My heart's enshrined in bitter anguish,
Yet never cry from me has reached you;
My heart's deep emotion have I stifled,
And every shadow of my sorrow hidden.

* * * * *

Blessed had I been, how far more blessed,
Had I but Heavenward turned my devotion!"

Among the Minnesinger was one who found a moment sufficiently warmed by the sunshine of summer to write a really delicious song on a girl's tryst with her lover. It closes in a manner quite out of the usual Dreamer-style:

[1]"With foot hurrying and heart beating,
Swift I hastened to the meeting,
Found my lover waiting there;
My true love was there before me,
And he clasped me and bent o'er me,
Till I thrilled with joy and fear.
Did my lover kiss, you said?
Tra-lira-la!
Nay,—why are my lips so red?"

We do not even know the name of this Dreamer, and cannot help feeling that he was a most inharmo-

[1]Translation by Rev. Sir F. A. Gore Ousely.

nious element among the pale exaltations of his fellow singers.

Richard Wagner, that loyal German, has made for us, in his "Tannhäuser," a most wonderful tonal and poetic picture of the Minnesinger. Even he, with his warm humanity and splendid wealth of artistic emotion, made no attempt to vitalise nor solidify the aerial charm of the Dreamers. To Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach and the rest, Wagner gave music as sweet, as pure and as unreal as mountain mists. As living men who breathed, suffered, and loved we can hardly picture them; but as Dreamers,—ah, they dreamed most marvellously!

The names of the best known Minnesinger are: Frederick the Red (1152), Spervogel (1150), Heinrich von Beldeke (1184), Ulrich von Lichenstein (1275), Hartmann von Ane, Dietmar von Aest, Kürenburger, Nithart von Reunthal, Gottfried von Strassbourg, Konried von Würzburg, Friedebrandt, Reinmar Hagenau, Reinmar der Zweiter, Heinrich von Morungen, Walther von der Vogelweide, and Wolfram von Eschenbach.

The Minnesinger were less often of noble birth than the Troubadours of the South. Serfs as well as lords had been swept into the great idealistic movement, religion and feudalism had joined hands, and the long-neglected Folk-song in its sublimated form drew all its exponents to a common lyrical level.

The exercise of their art carried the Minnesinger into court-life, whatever their birth, and their position was always an honourable one, for music was still the chief intellectual interest of the nobles. But many of the Minnesinger were men whose only claim to recognition was that they were singers of songs.

There were three forms of Minnesänger: the *Lied* (Song), *Lerch* (Lay) and *Dichtespruch* (Proverb). The *Minnelied* was a composition of three parts, the first two being called the *Stollen* (Stanzas) or *Aufgesang* (Opening Song). These were exactly alike, metrically and melodically. The third part was called the *Abgesang* (After-song), and had no visible nor audible connection with the first *Stollen*. It bears a very faint and remote resemblance to our Refrain.

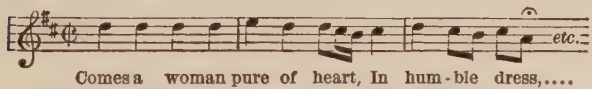
The *Minnelerch* was usually a careful development or adaptation of a well-known air,—sometimes a church chant, and occasionally some very ancient dance-melody. The character of the Minnelerch seems a bit mysterious and obscure, as a matter of fact, and appears to have changed its colour and form with every variable wind of the Dreamers' fancies.

The *Dichtespruch*, or Proverb, was a fairly clear form of composition, albeit not particularly interesting. Its melody was definite and complete as a rule, and not divided into separate parts like the *Lied* and *Lerch*. It was repeated in its entirety for each stanza, or *Strophe*, of the song, and if the composer had sub-

sequent poems to set to music, he went on using the melody of his old *Spruch*,—which was a fine and simple exhibition of musical economy! The character of the *Spruch* was usually intensely idealistic and delicately austere. Spervogel's "*Frauenschöne* (Woman's Loveliness)" is a particularly charming *Dichtespruch*, both as to words and music:

"Comes a woman, pure of heart, in humble dress,
Gowned in simple cloth, yet decked in loveliness,—
Flowers seem swaying in her grace,
Sunshine streams from out her face!
And, as she passes, all the modest grace of May-time bearing,
What eye would seek the woman bold, fine stuffs and jewels wearing?"

The air, which cannot be given entire, as it is rather a long one, begins in this way:



The two greatest Minnesinger, without question, were Walther von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach,—both so familiar to the musical world through Wagner.

May de Rudder, who writes with so much sympathy and understanding of the period of the *Minnegesänge*, gives the following description of the great minstrel Vogelweide as portrayed in an old Heidelberg manuscript:

"His head gently drooping, and supported on his

left hand, his right hand holding the viol used for accompaniments, his face framed in his short beard, and in the long curling hair that falls upon his shoulders; with eyes that perpetually dream: so does he appear before us, greeting us with the sweetest and frankest expression,—the most fascinating of all Minnesinger and the greatest lyric poet before Goethe: Walther von der Vogelweide. . . ."

He was born in the manor of the Vogelweide, near Waidebruck, in Tyrol. The date of his birth is not known, but it was between the middle and the end of the twelfth century. His family was an old and noble one, but exceedingly poor, and unable to live in a manner suitable to their rank. The boy Walther spent most of his youth out of doors, wandering in the woods, and listening to the birds. His love for them has become proverbial, and has served innumerable poets for a theme. He was known to declare in after years that his lyric gift had been learned from the birds in the forest near the Vogelweide Castle. He had a great longing to study the art of making Minnegesänge,—to learn the "Singen und Sagen" (as it was called) that constituted musical cultivation at that time. And when he was not quite twenty years old he journeyed to Vienna and began his education under the great master, Reinmar, known as Reinmar der Alte (the Elder), and termed by one enthusiast, "The nightingale of Haguenau."

Walther loved his master dearly, and, on Reinmar's death, wrote: "I am afflicted to know that thine eloquent speech and thy most sweet song have so quickly left my life, and that I shall see thee not again upon the earth. Most willingly would I go with thee; for I have no will to sing longer here. . . ."

Frederick, Duke of Austria, who had been the patron of Reinmar, befriended Walther after the older master's death, but was killed in Palestine in 1198, and the young singer was left to his own resources.

He became interested in political and religious questions, making patriotic *Lieder* and *Dichtesprüche*, and quite neglecting the gentler branches of his art.

"The German race surpasses all others,"

he asserted, aggressively, in one Proverb:

"The men are all noble,
The women are all beautiful as the angels;
Come to our country and you will find happiness.
May I dwell here long!"

This was Walther's most strenuous period. He soon slipped into the graceful "chivalric verses" of the day, and wrote exquisite poems on woods and streams and choiring birds. In 1202 he went to the Wartburg near Eisenach, and was graciously received by Hermann, Landgraf of Thuringia. Hermann was deeply interested in all art and culture, and made his Court a meeting-ground for the most famous Minne-

singer of his time. There Walther met fellow-poets, and further perfected his own art. Wolfram von Eschenbach made a deep impression upon him, and the two Minnesinger became and remained close friends.

Walther von der Vogelweide lived a gentle, peaceful, and kindly life, but at heart he was deeply melancholy, as all true Dreamers are apt to be. He it was who wrote:

"He who seeks happiness here below loses it all."

And that intensely pessimistic poem:

"On the surface the world is beautiful,—white, green, and red;
At the bottom it is black,—sombre even as death."

After a long sojourn among men, and the fashioning of many songs, he died in the Monastery of Würzburg in 1230.

They say that before he died he begged the monks to cover the stone above his grave with crumbs each day, that his beloved birds might never be hungry. Longfellow has written a poem in which he tells of the Abbot's failure to comply with the request, from motives of frugality.

On the tomb where Walther von der Vogelweide lies is this inscription:

"Der du die *Vogel* so gut, O,
Walther, zu *Weiden*,
Verstandest!"

Gottfried von Strassbourg, in his preface to "Tristan," has a word of tribute to pay to

> " . . . Vogelweide,
> Hè ! How clearly, across the meadows,
> His vibrant tones resound !
> So marvellous was his song,—
> So delicate his voice,—
> So varied and beautiful his music!"

Wolfram von Eschenbach (sometimes called Eschelbach) was born in Switzerland, a little later than Walther von der Vogelweide. His master in song was Friedebrandt,—a musician less well known than many of the Minnesinger, but a man of ability notwithstanding. Wolfram's musical gifts were much less marked than Walther's, but he was a great poet.

After travelling all over Germany he finally, in 1200, made Hermann's Court his permanent headquarters. There he sang, and dreamed, and passed long tranquil years.

There are records of a famous contest between Wolfram and a certain great singer, Klingsohr. The Landgraf had offered a prize to the winner, and it was believed that Wolfram would easily gain it. He sang a number of really beautiful religious and idealistic songs, but Klingsohr, who seems to have been less of a Dreamer than his rival, far surpassed him in romantic lyrics. The Landgraf was obliged, albeit regretfully, to give the prize to Klingsohr.

Wolfram excelled in poetry which demanded an exalted spiritual vein of inspiration. His noblest work—that, indeed, through which he has a fixed and unapproachable place in artistic history,—was the epic poem "Parzifal."

"Not only," says Fètis, "was he one of the great song-writers of his day, but, by virtue of the wealth of his imagination, the high character of his ideas, and the expression and elegance of his style, he is recognised as one of the genuine Epic Poets."

He was made Chevalier,—as a tribute to his achievements,—and spent much of the latter part of his life in travel. His very last days were passed in the Swiss castle where his ancestors had lived and died.

All who knew Wolfram von Eschenbach had a word for his sweet and lovable personality, the charm of which was not affected by a certain exaggerated sobriety and dreaminess.

It is hard to say which of these two was the most typical Dreamer,—Walther von der Vogelweide, or Wolfram von Eschenbach. Both lived in a mystic, cloud-shadowed world, where music flowed in faintest and most elusive harp-tones, and a radiance of other worlds stole in through walls of glowing mist. The sadness, the beauty, the mystery of things touched them both profoundly,—but of bitter and unreasoning human suffering it is doubtful if they understood very much. For they were Dreamers;—not sorely tried and

wofully striving men, whose tragic glory it was to laugh over their own defeats, and struggle on the more stoutly for the laughter,—but merely Dreamers.

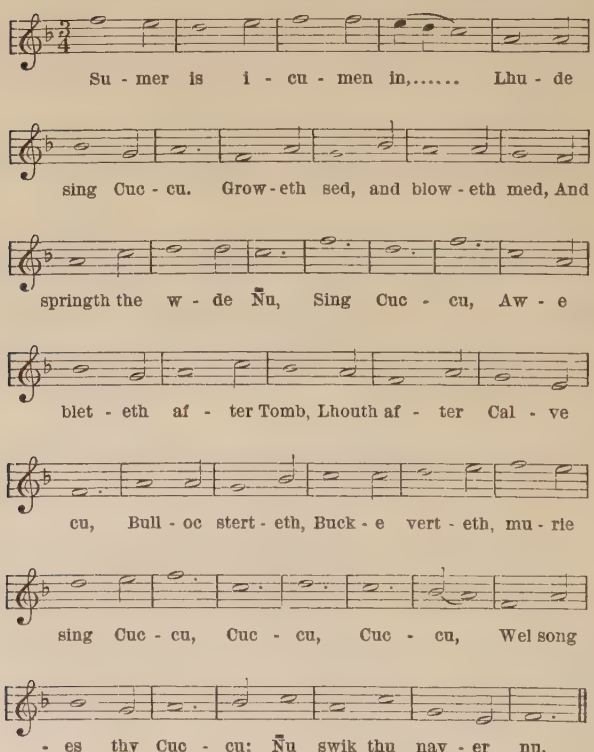
"Alas! where have vanished all my years?"

asked Walther von der Vogelweide, in one of his songs:

"Has all my life, then, been but a dream? . . . "

THE MONK OF READING ABBEY

THE READING ROTA


Su - mer is i - cu - men in,..... Lhu - de
sing Cuc - cu. Grow - eth sed, and blow - eth med, And
springth the w - de N̄u, Sing Cuc - cu, Aw - e
blet - eth af - ter Tomb, Lhouth af - ter Cal - ve
cu, Bull - oc stert - eth, Buck - e vert - eth, mu - rie
sing Cuc - cu, Cuc - cu, Cuc - cu, Wel song
- es thy Cuc - cu; N̄u swik thu nav - er nu.

IV

THE MONK OF READING ABBEY

THE Monk's name was John of Fornsete, but beyond this the modern world knows little of his personality and private life. To us he is, first and foremost, the man who wrote "Sumer is icumen in," the earliest piece of harmonic music, and one of the loveliest of all melodies,—somewhere about the year 1226. So little indeed is known authentically about John of Fornsete that we may let our imaginations have a free rein concerning him, and, whatever we may determine as to his life or his individuality, no man shall rise up and call us inaccurate nor misinformed.

The date of his birth is very uncertain and problematical,—but it could hardly have been later than 1190. Even this would make him but thirty-six when he wrote his Canon, and the monastic records show that at that time he was already a man of learning and achievements. The truth concerning his antecedents will probably be forever wrapped in equal mystery. A few writers insist upon calling him John Farnset,—an error for which it is difficult to account

in the light of the many existing records and authorities,—but it is conclusively proved that his correct title was John of Fornsete. The little word "of" is our only clue as to his station or circumstances, and though that might mean several different things, we will assume the most probable explanation of its presence.

"Of Fornsete," might mean that he was born in some lonely hamlet of Berkshire named Fornsete, or that he grew up under the protection of some great feudal lord, some Earl of Fornsete, of an extinct nobility, whose serfs and vassals went by his name. Reasoning thus from a purely hypothetical basis, we may include the former under the latter supposition, and fancy our hero as coming from the feudal village Fornsete, where a great lord held sway, levied taxes, and, perhaps, in a sporadically generous mood, singled out some one of the more gifted of his young serfs to be educated. In England, as in France, the Benedictine and Augustine monasteries were the only schools, and so it happened that the boy John was sent to the Abbey of Reading.

One cannot help having an idea that he was not a typical monk,—for we know that he had a sympathetic ear for melodies that over-reached the ascetic limits of the Church music of the day, and that he had a wholesome love of the brown earth and all the fresh greenness of out-of-door England. It is probable that he

was a very normal English boy, and it is not improbable that his novitiate was a long and much broken one. Perhaps he—like a certain French youth of whom you will hear later,—broke the rules occasionally, and ran away. I think he must have known what it was to dance on the grass with some clear-eyed village girl, to the sound of the bagpipes and lusty country voices; and it is certain that he rambled in the woods at dawning time, when the world was wet with dew and green with spring. But however this may have been, in time he pulled his cowl closer over his eyes, and turned his back on the good, gay world forever.

Originally Reading, or Reding, meant the home of the descendants of Red,—a man's name. Some "prehistoric Briton," we must suppose, founded the little Berkshire town, and so it became permanently known by his name. It lies twenty-nine miles southwest of London, on the river Kennet, just before it enters the Thames. Reading was the headquarters of the Danes at the time of their famous inroad on Wessex in the year 871, and the scene of certain of their subsequent defeats. It was burned by them in 1006, and taken by the Earl of Essex, under a Parliamentary decision in 1643. So it is clear that Reading has played its part in history, and it seems a pity that it should be chiefly celebrated to-day for its manufactories, and for the fine hunting possibilities of its surrounding country! But there are certain wonderful

old ruins to be seen there still,—the ruins of the great Benedictine Monastery, Reading Abbey, the home of John of Fornsete.

In the monasteries of those mediæval times were centred all the embryo beginnings of learning. The seeds of art, music and literature were sown and cherished within the cloister walls, and the "Men of God" held in their hands the first feeble shoots of all that we now term culture and education.

While the Church has never been swift to welcome the progress that comes with the changing of old orders, she has unwaveringly protected such institutions as were tested and proven worthy of her support. She has never encouraged the step forward, but she has always prevented the step backward. So, a restraining but a sustaining power, she has been almost the greatest of all factors in the development of the most liberal and unconventional forms of art.

A knowledge of the science of counterpoint,—the mathematics, rhetoric, and even spelling of music,—was confined entirely to the religious orders. Only the Folk-song,—fresh, spontaneous but usually ephemeral,—existed outside monastic boundaries. All the enduring elements of music were fostered and preserved by the learned brothers, of whom John of Fornsete was one.

These faithful, scholarly, patient men of Reading Abbey! One's heart goes out to them as one studies

the narrowness of their lives, the sternness of their discipline, the frugality of their comforts. Yet they seem to have been genial souls for the most part, despite much fasting, more silence, and so little sleep that one becomes sympathetically drowsy in thinking of them!

"Let Monks praise God seven times a day,"—was the unvarying rule and command of all the Orders. This meant no perfunctory devotions, slipped in between worldly duties, but definite and rather lengthy services, performed with care and reverence, and always promptly upon the prescribed moment. The first service was "at cock-crowing." The second was Matins (or Mattins, as the old books have it)—at six o'clock in the morning, the third at nine, the fourth at noon, the fifth at three, the sixth,—Vespers,—at six, and the last at seven, when the Completory was sung, and the monks were permitted to think of slumber. They counted time somewhat differently, by the bye,—six in the morning being "First hour," and six at night "Twelfth hour." The hours of the night, being spent in sleep, were not counted at all. There are, however, records that show that "early prayer unto God in the Highest" began at two in the morning. For special seasons and occasions there were all-night vigils to be observed, so, though the monks went to bed soon after sundown, they were never permitted in all their religious lives one full night's sleep.

They always fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays until three in the afternoon, and in Lent no mouthful of food was permitted to pass their lips until after six each night. An exception to the rules of fasting was made from Easter until Whitsuntide, when they were moderately well fed. Truly there was wisdom in the old monastic rule: "Let the Cellarer be a discreet man, to give all their meat in due season!" Discretion would indeed seem to be an essential qualification for the holder of this office. The meagre allowances of food doled out by the "discreet" Cellarer were taken "in company but without speech." Indeed silence was one of the most all-pervading requirements of the monasteries,—both as a gurantee of decorum and as an inspiration to devout meditation.

Sometimes, to be sure, some merry brother would whisper a joke or a funny tale, and the grim Refectory would thrill with repressed laughter. Sometimes the rule making it unseemly that the Prior or Abbot sit alone at meat, gave opportunities for a gay interchange of worldly amenities between the Reverend Father and some favoured one of the Brethren. And sometimes the quietly shadowed old monastery gardens heard the stories of dead days, softly told by the monks who paced there during recreation hours.

But for the most part the monastic world was a dumb one,—a lake of stillness, landlocked from the beating waves of the big world-sea outside. There

among the dark blue shadows, the incense clouds, as faintly mauve as twilight mists, and the cold, grave measures of the church chants, the Men of God lived out their lives. There they worked silently upon the wonderful missal-pages one day to be treasured as relics of ancient art, or set down blue and crimson notes laboriously, immortalising some quaint old psalm-tune,—or merely prayed, in dingy robes growing ever dingier about the knees from over-much kneeling on the rough stones of the chapel.

Now the early Britons, report and common belief to the contrary, were intensely musical. One mediæval writer declares: "There lived good singers in England, and they sang sweetly; such as Masters Johannes Filius Dei, Maklevit of Winchester, and Blakesmit at the Court of Henry II." Frédéric Louis Ritter, after quoting the above, adds that John of Fornsete belonged to the same epoch and category. So we see that he was a famous musician in a land which boasted many excellent exponents of music, and in a day when it held a rarely high place in the appreciation of the public.

The British people sang with the spontaneity and instinct of birds, as the Welsh people,—those insistent remnants of the old race,—do to-day. And, curiously enough, they always sang *in harmony*. Instead of singing their folk-songs as single and simple melodies, they made rounds, catches and chorals out of them.

They struck the chords by ear of course, not knowledge, and loved the gracious combinations of notes. Even the children tried to sing contrapuntally—and sometimes succeeded, too!

Giraldus Cambrensis,—or Gerald Barry,—the famous Archbishop,—made an elaborate Latin record of this custom of the British people, to this effect:

"The Britons do not sing their tunes in unison like the inhabitants of other countries, but in different parts. So that when a company of singers meets to sing, as is usual in this country, as many different parts are heard as there are singers, who all finally unite in consonance and organic melody, under the softness of B flat."

Just what the learned Archbishop meant by "the softness of B flat" the author (with many regrets for the admission) frankly does not know!

"In the northern parts of Britain," he continues, ". . . the people there inhabiting make use of a kind of symphonic harmony in singing. . . . This they do not so much by art as by a habit which long practice has rendered almost natural; and this method of singing is become so prevalent amongst these people that hardly any melody is accustomed to be uttered simply or otherwise than variously, or in this twofold manner. . . ."

Where this instinct for correct harmony was born so naturally in the hearts, as well as on the lips, of the

people, it is not strange that we should find the first recorded piece of polyphonic or harmonic music in all history. Scattered folk-songs we have from other lands;—plaintive airs from Picardy and Provence, melodies gay, amorous and mournful,—sad and merry echoes from the heart-music of many lands; but, so far as recorded notation may testify, the Cradle of Harmony seems to have been England.

"Sumer is icumen in" bears the test of modern fineness of ear. Its harmonies are full and round, never stiff, and rarely even archaic. A song of to-day, simply harmonised without elaboration or tonal decoration, would be a brilliant achievement, if it reached the point of musical excellence attained by this quaint old English Canon. Even the consecutive fifths,—bugbears of benighted Harmony-students,—are used here with the splendid frankness of a modern master who wishes to show his superiority to the terrors of all such musical hobgoblins.

But the fact of the harmonic value of the "Reading Rota," as it is called, is too well established to require reiteration. The real purpose of this fragmentary commentary is to record a plea for its recognition as a great step in the growth of melody,—a monument in the history of Song.

"Sumer is icumen in" is most definitely and distinctly lyric. Its singing and singable quality is much more patent to the casual hearer than its har-

monic or contrapuntal ingenuity. It is first and foremost a song,—and a delicious one.

Moreover, as we have seen that the early English folk sang *all* their songs in Canon-form, it has a doubly emphasised right to be accepted as one of the great representative or typical songs of the Middle Ages. And the man who either composed it, or merely wrote it down, deserves to be called a Maker of Song,—even though we have no more of his recorded work to substantiate the title.

Ritter says that "the melody of the Rota is in the form of a ballad, and is pleasing and easily flowing." Emil Naumann declares: "The character of the melody is sweet and pastoral, and well adapted to the words." W. S. Rockstro, after speaking of the naïve and delightful old folk-songs, says: "We believe the melody of the Rota to be an inspiration of this kind,—a Folk-Song, *pur et simple*. . . ." Indeed most of the learned men who have commemorated the importance of the Rota as a harmonic record, wax enthusiastic over its melody. And Mr. Rockstro makes the following charming suggestion as to its possible origin:

". . . What more probable, then, than that a light-hearted young Postulant should troll it forth on some bright May morning, during the hour of recreation? That a second voice should chime in a little later? That the effect of the Canon should be noticed, admired, and experimented upon, until the Brethren

found that four of them could sing the tune, one after the other, in very pleasant harmony? . . ."

The music is written in queer square notes of red and black upon blue lines, and the entire piece of work is done with the care and skill which we should expect from a learned Ecclesiastic of John of Fornsete's high place in the monastic chronicles.[1] In the beautiful old manuscript there is, directly following the "Six Men's Song" (as a Canon like "Sumer" was called) a quaint Antiphon in praise of Thomas à Becket.

Of course they turned the Rota into a piece of church music,—the good monks! Nothing so riotously secular as a brazen song of summertide could be recognised or recorded in the Monastery without its due appendage of religious phrases.

The old English words are as follows:

"Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu.
Groweth sed, and bloweth med,
And springth the wde nu,
Sing cuccu.
Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteth,
Bucke verteth,
Murie sing cuccu,
Cuccu, cuccu,
Wel songes tha cuccu;
Ne swik thu naver nu."

[1]A fac-simile of the original manuscript can be seen in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. IV. (new edition). The

Or translated into modern phraseology:

"Summer is come in,
Loud sing cuckoo.
Groweth seed, and bloweth mead,
And springeth the woodland now.
Sing, Cuckoo.
The ewe bleateth for her lamb,
For her calf loweth the cow;
The bullock starteth,
The buck averteth,
Merry sing, Cuckoo.
Cuckoo, Cuckoo.
Well sung is thy Cuckoo,
Cease thou never now!"

Under these delightful old lines the good monks of Reading have written in with painstaking care the following devout Latin stanzas:

"Perspice christicola
Quæ dignatio
Cœlius agricola
Probitus vitio.
Filio non parceus
Exposuit mortis exitio
Qui captivos
Semivivos
À supplicio
Vitæ donat
Et secum coronat
In cœli solio."

Canon, complete in all its parts, and reproduced in modern notation, can be seen in the musical histories of Naumann, Burney, and others.

There are appended, also, some Latin directions as to the correct singing of the Canon. Somehow the churchly Latin has an odd effect when set to the buoyant air of that sweet old Round. Will some inquisitive reader please hum over to the melody a line or two of the Latin text? In doing so, I think he will be filled with a desire to chuckle,—even as many an irreverent and irrepressible young chorister chuckled, doubtless, when the monks sang the Canon at Mass,—and even as the good Monk John chuckled, albeit very softly, over its devout rendering.

For the Rota had no place nor right in ecclesiastical music. So rigid were the rules controlling the religious composition in those days,—rules built upon the noble but uncompromising work of the great Guido d'Arezzo,—that it was not permissible to write Church music outside of what was known as the Ecclesiastical Scale. All music which overstepped this strict and monotonous limit was considered inspired by the Devil, and was accounted written in *Il modo lascivo*,—the Wanton Key. And let it here be whispered: "Sumer is icumen in" was written in the Wanton Key! The Wanton Key, wherein the evil player-folk sang, while their women danced and twirled about the market-place, and the ungodly went to gape and listen! The Wanton Key, wherein the unshriven vagabonds of the highroads carolled their drinking-catches, as they stopped for a flagon of mead

when the dusk chilled the air! The Wanton Key, wherein young men and maidens sang love songs in secret wood ways under the green and silver sickle-moon! The Wanton Key, wherein mother-birds and mother-women trilled lullabies, when mating-time was over and the young had come.

Moreover the "*Pes,*" or ground-bass, of the Canon bears a suspicious resemblance,—as more than one musical savant has pointed out,—to the droning bag-pipe dearly beloved by the rustics of those days. Is it possible that our John of Fornsete, laughing in the shabby sleeve of his Order, wrote in that drone-bass to imitate the instrument so popular over all the country side? If so, one can picture the merry-eyed boys, sent to the Monastery for education and safe-keeping, nudging each other as they hummed and buzzed away at the long sustained *Pes,* and trying to catch the eye of the gentle, grave-faced, humorous Monk who was responsible for it!

What manner of man was he, this John of Fornsete? It is a baffling query, which the curious mind puts to the unyielding past. He was a learned man, called a Descanter among his Brethren, and skilled in the setting down of notes, in tints that should outlast the centuries, and in combinations that should stir the pulses of unborn cycles of musicians. He was a man very young in heart, of a surety, since he could put the summer-call of all England and all the world

into a few square-shaped notes of red and black on bars of blue. And, perhaps, he was a man with a sense of humour—if he suffered the Brethren to sing in the Wanton Key, and imitate the village bagpipes at High Mass!

Berkshire was a wide-sweeping level country, and the flat, clean spaces stretched off to the sky-line,—broken here and there by woodlands, and dappled with sun-flecks and cloud-shadows. The winds blew keen and cool from the wholesome north, and there was a freshness, a tang, and a grip in the free air, fit to breed sound hearts and rich blood and the fine fruition of a fine race.

Yet in the Monastery it was as though a stone cup had been pressed, rim downward, upon the green earth; and in the vacuum within dwelt the monks of Reading,—and John of Fornsete among them. I think he was given to dreaming a bit,—oftener than the other Brethren, oftener perhaps than were quite wise in the godly servant of a strict Order. Surely he had visions and memories, that came thronging and fluttering like butterflies through the chapel nave, with iridescent hues that blurred the brightness of the altar-lights, and a faint soft whirr of wings that, in tremulous music, dulled the sound even of his own sweet Canon. Surely there were twilights, when the Completory was yet to sing, through the purple dusk, when life cried to him with elfin voices from beyond the

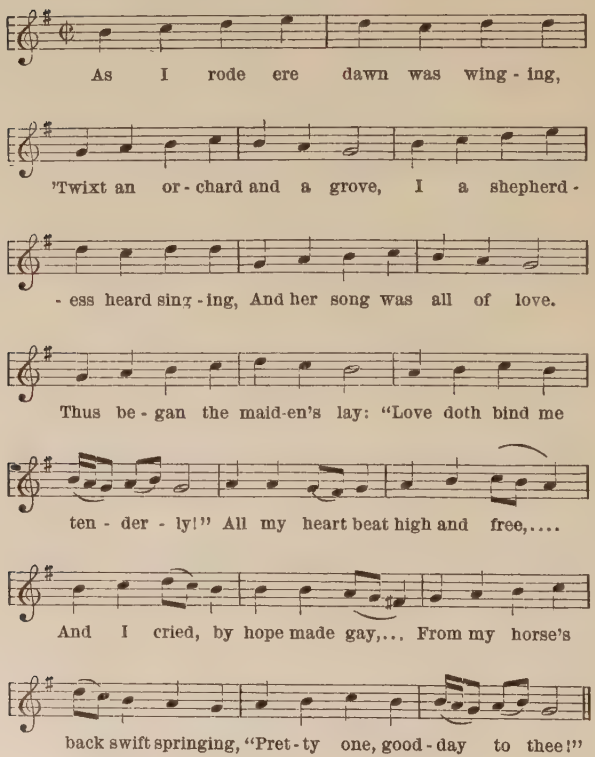
Monastery walls; and chill white dawns, when, as he chanted the first service, he shivered yearningly, hearing, above the monotone of the Latin prayers, the comfortable din of crowing cocks in neighbouring, alien hamlets.

It is all there in his song,—the blithe and tender sympathy with quickening nature and the warming earth, with love, and longing, and the rapture of fulfilment. The bird's call and the heart's leap,—they are both to be found in that first and sweetest of English songs, that fragrant, opalescent fragment of a dream of the young Summer, dreamed over seven hundred years ago.

Among the mists of the dead centuries he passes, John of Fornsete,—a cowled and habited figure, with averted eyes. We may not see his face, we may not know of his birth, nor of his death,—least of all of his cloistered life. We can only smile with him in spirit, as we sing the melody of his Rita softly to our own hearts, and, in the singing, smell the warm, dew-wet grass, and hear the cuckoo singing through the waking woods.

KING THIBAULT, THE TROUBADOUR

THE SONG OF THE KING


As I rode ere dawn was wing - ing,
'Twixt an or - chard and a grove, I a shepherd -
- ess heard sing - ing, And her song was all of love.
Thus be - gan the maid-en's lay: "Love doth bind me
ten - der - ly!" All my heart beat high and free,....
And I cried, by hope made gay,... From my horse's
back swift springing, "Pret - ty one, good - day to thee!"

V

KING THIBAULT, THE TROUBADOUR

ONCE upon a time there lived a beautiful and brilliant lady for whom the Troubadours of the Midi sang their songs, and to whom all men paid homage; and she was called Blanche of Navarre. Her father was Sancho the Strong, King of Navarre, and her husband was Thibault III., the great and good Count of Champagne and Brie. And she was the mother of that Thibault whom the world knows as the greatest of Troubadours. Now the Comte de Champagne, Thibault III., died soon after his son was born, and the boy became, in his turn, Count of the great estates of Champagne and of Brie. And the Comtesse, his lady-mother, betook herself to the Court of King Philippe Auguste, and there dwelt for the years of her widowhood. So it happened that our Thibault spent his childhood at the French Court, was educated there, and there while still a child met the woman whose influence was later to colour his whole life.

Philippe Auguste's son, the Dauphin Louis, was a brave and stalwart prince, and it was fitting that he

should wed a great lady, since he must some day rule over France. So from France went forth envoys in search of the Dauphin's bride and the future queen of France. And one day a great treaty was made between the kingdoms of France and of Castille, and a state wedding was solemnised: between Louis, Dauphin of France, and the little Princess Blanche, of Castille. She was the daughter of King Alfonso the Good, and that Princess Eleanor of England, who is known as the "Damsel of Brittany," and at the time of her marriage she was a yellow-haired slender thing, but little more than thirteen years old.

Now in due time the great Philippe Auguste joined the other kings of France, and the Dauphin became Louis VIII., and for his courage and his daring personality they called him Louis the Lion, and so he is known in history. And when he was crowned King of France his child-wife was crowned Queen. And he brought her home to his French Court, and the people, seeing her child face and fair hair, loved her, and said: "Long live our young Queen, Blanche of Castille."

Thibault IV. de Champagne was born in Troyes, France, in 1201, a year after the royal marriage. As has been said, his father died but a short time afterward. When Blanche of Castille came to France, the Comtesse de Champagne was a widow, whose chief thought was for her baby; to this absorbing interest

she added an almost motherly affection for the lonely little Queen, whose youth and shyness made her a pathetic figure at the brilliant French Court.

Many years younger than Blanche of Navarre, Comtesse de Champagne, she, nevertheless, became that lady's dear friend. As a matter of fact, they were distant kinswomen, and of natures well accorded to one another. So the two Blanches, the gracious and beautiful Comtesse and the golden-haired young Queen, became inseparable. And it came to pass that during Thibault's babyhood, Queen Blanche's fair face was as familiar to him as his own mother's.

The death of the Comtesse while he was still very young left him to the tender mercies of a world that was at the time very busy with large state affairs, among which a small boy had but little place or use. But the boy's brave and merry spirit and brilliant wit brought him safely, even triumphantly, through the brief, uneasy childhood of the French youth at that day, and at an early age he began to take part in the big political movements which were convulsing France, as well as to apply himself enthusiastically to the arts and sciences so far as they were then understood and developed.

When Thibault was fourteen the Queen's eldest son was born,—he who was some day to be St. Louis, of high place in history. It seems to have been soon after this important event that Thibault left the Court

and went to his own possessions. As he grew older he found that the administration of these vast estates filled his time and thought. He was a feudal lord of great importance, and had a wide influence with the petty barons whose sporadic uprisings disquieted the country. Thibault's allegiance, unconditional and whole-hearted, belonged to the Crown, and he worshipped his mother's friend, the golden-haired Reine Blanche, as utterly as though she were not only his Queen but his patron saint. Nevertheless, he spent little time at Court during the latter years of his boyhood, and occupied himself chiefly with his own affairs, —the management of his lands and vassals, and the perfection of his education. His name grew to be a famous one in that early world of letters, sciences and arts, and he was well known then as he is well known to-day: as a great noble, a charming and courtly man, a brilliant student, and the greatest of the Troubadours. None of these mediæval minstrels ever put so fitly the varying notes of a man's life into robust yet graceful song. For manliness,—wholesome, vital, and of widely ranging interests,—was the predominating attribute in the make-up of Thibault de Champagne. He was, says an old account,—a man of "*un courage mouvant* (a *moving* courage)." He was versatile, impulsive, brilliant, inconstant, and possessed to a degree of perfection the quality of personal charm. He was an enormous man,—so broad and tall

and strong that he was called "Le Gros" by some persons. "His figure, tall and well proportioned," says Fétis, "his courage, his address in the exercise of arms, his magnificence and his liberality, his taste for letters and his talent for poetry and music, rendered him an accomplished cavalier."

People loved him wherever he went, and in spite of his changeable, impulsive nature, there was not in all his being one shadow that was dishonourable, cowardly or unkind. The mistakes he made were those of impulse. He loved the King, and, against his own wishes, rode with him in an attack upon one of the Counts of Toulouse, a kinsman of his own. But after the siege had continued for several days, and the miseries of war had grown more conspicuous than its glories, the young Count experienced a sudden revulsion of feeling. He gathered together his men and rode away,—leaving his enemies to say what they chose about his courage! Subsequently he persuaded Toulouse to submit to France.

This constant yielding to the spur of the moment won for him an unenviable reputation, though his friends found in all his vagaries no fault that they could not readily forgive.

Thibault loved gaiety, and many were the great banquets which he gave in the Château de Brie,—banquets such as only a Troubadour and important feudal lord of that day could dream of giving. One of the

chroniclers of these mediæval feasts gives us this amazing menu: a stag roasted whole, with hot pepper sauce; wild boar with peppers and cloves; peacocks, swans and chickens fried in lard; roast capons with clove sauce; pies of deer, pigeon and pheasant. From the pheasant pies live birds escaped, and after a time falcons were loosed, and between courses the guests watched the incidental sport and laid wagers on various birds! Then came eel-pies, cakes, tarts, dates, figs, pomegranates, and other sweets; finally the spices: ginger, cloves, nutmeg and pepper. These were served as a course by themselves, and their purpose was to create an unendurable thirst. Throughout the meal wines of different sorts flowed ceaselessly,—wines mixed with perfumes, spices, honey, and great quantities of pepper. The latter flavouring was chiefly in favour, as it prolonged the excessive artificial thirst. At the end of the meal the table was cleared of all save the flagons, and the jongleurs were summoned to play and sing while the guests spent a few additional hours over their peppered wine.

Truly, the old Romans would have had difficulty in surpassing feasts such as these!

Yet in one old book we find,—surprising paradox!—that the Troubadour's rule of life was as follows:

"By eating well and sleeping softly a man may lead an easy life. But he who wishes to rise to eminence of worth, must needs subject himself to roughest

hardship. He must exert his utmost, here and there, must take away and give according to the exigency of the time and place!"

It might be pleasant to feel that our Thibault was of the type who might have subscribed to the preceding exemplary sentiments, but alas! it seems fairly certain that his was rather the life-loving soul which would have found delight in the Lucullan banquets recently described.

As to dress,—a Troubadour was forced to dress richly, and be sure Thibault went with the times, in apparel as in manners and customs. According to the strange symbolic fashions of the day, red, yellow, green, purple, gold, silver and sky blue were understood, by an unwritten law, to denote a spirit of good cheer, courage and other pleasant qualities. A man who donned garments of brown, grey or any tint too subdued, confessed and proclaimed himself a coward, dullard and misanthrope! Therefore we must picture Thibault as clothed in rainbow fabrics. Indeed we have one significant and authentic description of him, as he sat at the King's table one day many years later, when he was something more than Thibault, Comte de Champagne. ". . . And next our Thibault, King of Navarre," says the ancient Navarrese historian. "He was very richly accoutred in a tunic and mantel of cloth of gold, a silver belt, and a hat of fine gold."

Ah, yes! Thibault loved the goodly things of this life, whether represented by spices and perfumed wine, and roasted deer, or by a "hat of fine gold,"—by the emotional loveliness of lute-music, or by the favour of the Throne. Not for him was the tender simplicity of Regnault in his lonely Castle, or the careless gaiety of the romantic Bernart, wandering about the earth, vagrant-like, and singing love-songs. And yet he had a brave and genial spirit, with fine poetic heights therein, and a heart fully fitted with the capacity to love most generously and nobly.

The year in which Thibault became twenty-five was the real beginning of his life; and a strange, exciting and rather terrible beginning it was. In the November of that year, 1226, Louis the Lion died suddenly and mysteriously in Montpensier, Auvergne. And thereupon arose a great clamour of voices throughout the provinces of France,—murmuring, shouting, whispering, proclaiming, hinting one suspicion: that Thibault de Champagne, for love of Queen Blanche, had poisoned the King!

Thibault's knowledge of medicine, among other sciences, counted against him, and his intimacy at the French Court gave a seeming foundation for the evil minds in the kingdom. Moreover, the Queen was at the height of her wonderful beauty, and it is certain that Thibault had adored her, albeit humbly, from his babyhood. The coarse-grained nobles who disliked

Thibault and envied him his influence and power could hardly be expected to distinguish or differentiate, and altogether the young Count found himself in a most enraging position. No open accusations were made, either officially or to his face, but the air rang with the reiterated rumours until he felt as though he were inundated in a wave of gnats and tiny wasps. His mood of resentment was one which only needed a breath of wind to be turned against those whom he loved best. This breath of wind was not lacking.

At this time there was a league of barons ranged against the Throne, the latter being now occupied by Blanche, who was Regent during the minority of Louis IX. These barons and feudal lords were headed by Pierre de Drieux, Count of Brittany. He was a curious man, fierce and taciturn,—the sworn enemy of law and order, and possessed of a supreme hatred for the Church. The priests had given him the nickname "Mauclerc" or "Bad Scholar," and so he was known everywhere. He and his league of conspirators against the Queen Regent longed to have the name of Thibault de Champagne added to their lists. And, unknown to themselves, they had a powerful ally, very close to the Throne,—one who was as anxious as they that the young Count should be estranged from Louis and his mother. This was the Prince Philippe, —son of Philippe Auguste by Marie de Meran, and brother of the late King. He was a scoundrel of the

first water, and had won renown for his brutal treatment of his wife. This unfortunate lady, the daughter of Count Renard of Boulogne, was kept shut up in prison, that her lord might do as he willed without incumbrance or interference. Philippe hated Thibault,—either because of his influence at Court, or for some private reason,—and was determined to harm him in some way.

Young Louis IX. was to be crowned at Rheims, and Blanche sent out a royal command that all loyal lords of France should be present to acknowledge and pay homage to their new King. When Thibault, still smarting from the whispered accusations made against him, presented himself and his retinue at the gates of Rheims, the soldiers of the Commune met him with insolence. And then,—unspeakable indignity and outrage!—the city gates crashed loudly shut in his very face. The Count of Champagne and Brie was formally refused admittance to Rheims. This insult, of course, was by the order of Prince Philippe, and it was effectual. Thibault believed that the Queen had subjected him to the humiliation, and his rage now was beyond all bounds. His loyalty to the Crown had brought him only shame and suspicion, and he vowed to have no more to do with royalty. He rode straight to the Castle of Brie and sent out a messenger to seek Mauclerc. In another day he was a member of the League of Barons,—one of the revolutionists and

conspirators against Queen Blanche and the boy-king.

Poor Thibault! We may guess what his unhappiness must have been. The habit of thought of a lifetime overturned in a single day! It was quite in keeping with his nature that, in spite of a probable lack of enthusiasm in his own heart, he should remain savagely loyal to his new cause during revolt after revolt,—and defeat after defeat! The Queen, as history has shown, was one of the rare master minds of statesmanship. She managed the repeated insurrections and conspiracies which disturbed her son's kingdom with wit, tact, and justice, and succeeded in winning countless concessions from the rebels. One of her great strokes of diplomacy was the arrangement of a marriage between her young son, Prince John, and Yolande, the daughter of Mauclerc himself!

By intellect, strength of character, graciousness and beauty, she controlled and conquered the hostile barons, and slowly made her strong, sweet influence felt and recognised by the last and least of her subjects. From afar Thibault felt her power and her charm, but he was not yet ready to swing back from the red light of rebellion to the peaceful sunshine of royal favour.

Suddenly in the middle of these stirring times, in 1234, his grandfather, old Sancho the Strong, died; and Thibault found himself King of Navarre. Per-

haps the new dignity and responsibility sobered his defiant spirit. At all events it was almost immediately after this change in his estate that he consented to an interview with Blanche. The end was inevitable. Though well beyond forty, the Queen was as beautiful as she had ever been, for hers was a loveliness that grew and softened with years. And never had her fascination been more potent. The little yellow-haired girl whom Thibault's mother had loved, the dignified gracious Queen whom he had adored from afar and delighted to serve throughout his boyhood, the devoted wife and mother who was justly renowned over the whole kingdom for her good and sweet qualities,—these different persons, while remaining faintly visible in the woman before him, seemed but as shadows. What he really saw, as he looked up at her,—for he had dropped on one knee at her feet,—was a new, brilliant, beautiful being,—with the wisdom and gentleness of maturity in her eyes, and hair as golden as the golden sun for her crown. "Then," says the very ancient French history, "he rose up and spoke to her, saying, 'By my faith, Madame, my heart and my body and all my lands are at your commands. Nor could you ask of me a thing that I would not do with good will. Never, God please, against you or yours may I live!' "

When Thibault left Blanche he knew in his own heart that not only did he stand ready to die for her as

his Queen, but that he loved her as his lady. Thibault was no longer a boy, but a man thirty-five years old. Further, he was now a King,—albeit a petty one,—and so he permitted himself to love her. Nevertheless, he knew that his love must be quite without hope. Says the historian: "He often held in remembrance the sweet regard of the Queen and her beautiful face. His heart was filled with much fervent tenderness and love; but when he recalled how high a lady she was, of how great a name, and of how good a life and an upright,—he could not hope; but remained in loving thoughts and great sadness. . . ."

So melancholy and miserable and lovesick did he finally become that he went to a gathering of Wise Men of the day,—seers whose life it was to peer into the soul's mysteries and provide advice for the sickest brains. And they recommended an extensive study of the arts, which he had been wont to love as a boy.

". . . And for that profound thought aids melancholy, to him it was declared by certain Wise Men that he should study the art of sweet songs and the fine sounds of instruments. And so did he."

Naturally, he sang chiefly of Blanche, or for her,—as all Troubadours have sung of and for their ladies since time began. He rang the changes on her fairness; he described her in every metaphor and figure which his fertile imagination could suggest. He said

that she "made all his deepest sighs," and of her name he cried:

"Hè! Blanche! Name brilliant and silvery!"

Sometimes he grew whimsical, likened her to a snow-white deer, plunging courageously through the thickets, and sighed that if he might but capture that marvellous deer—

"Who then so glad, so joyous, as Thibault?"

He sang of her wonderful golden hair with the adoration of a sun-worshipper; and all the while, as we read his outpourings, we find a completeness of humility, tenderness and respect which appears vastly to his credit when we consider the manners and morals of his time.

"I love whom I may never dare implore," he writes. "And mine eyes are not brave enough to lift themselves unto her. She whom I love is of a great rank . . . and her beauty hath rendered me presumptuous."

He worried greatly over the remaining delinquents in the League of Barons. "The White Deer stands among wolves,"—he said, in one of his poems. "How to be certain that they will not rend her?"

By this time his enemies were at work again spreading slanderous stories, and reviving in the public mind the old doubts as to Louis VIII.'s mode of death. Hugues de la Fierté wrote a *Servante* (political song),

which was repeated all over France. Parts of this are too malevolent to be of interest, but the passage most extensively quoted ran something as follows:

"Count Thibault is more apt at *medicine* than at chivalry! . . . Well is France defended, my lords and barons, now that a woman rules over her,—and such a woman as you know! He and she, side by side, governing the country together! He had no need to get a crown for himself, since already he is crowned otherwise!" . . .

But now neither Thibault nor the Queen cared for the slanders of their enemies. Thibault was much at Court, and much with his lady and Queen,—whose fine mind and rare charm attracted him even more than her beauty. Though he had taken up the study of song as a cure for love he had no sooner acquired proficiency in the art than he hastened to his Queen's feet to sing his love-songs to her!

[1]"Love is endowed with all-surpassing might,"

sang Thibault, the Troubadour,—

"And good or ill bestows in wanton jest.
To me too long he portions only spite,
And reason bids me drive him from my breast.
But heart like mine ne'er yet was made of clay,
And Love! Love! Love! it cries with ne'er a stay;
No other reason from it can you wrest;—
So I *shall* love, and naught can say me nay!"

[1]Translation by Henry Carrington, Dean of Bocking.

In a more despondent and less defiant mood he wrote:

[1]"I thought I'd vanquished mighty love,
But find myself deceived;
For every hour, alas! I prove
The conquest unachieved.
By day I seek for ease in vain,
Or call on sleep by night;—
Sighs, tears, complaints, increase my pain,
Nor does a hope,—ye powers!—remain
That she will e'er my love requite!"

Whether or not the royal widow ever *did* "requite the love" of the man who had been born a year after her own marriage, no one will ever know unless those two picturesque and delightful ghosts should come back and vouchsafe the information. But she was most gracious, consulted him often in state affairs, and permitted him the intimacy of a close and trusted friend,—thereby showing the breadth and understanding of her rare nature. Reformed traitors are seldom accepted with so much magnanimity; but in this case the attitude was a wise one.

Several times during trivial battles the royal troops were in danger of defeat, and in each case Thibault's forces, arriving at a timely hour, saved the day. So he grew more and more a ruling factor in the French Government, and the League of Barons almost despaired of ever winning him back to their rebellious ranks.

[1]Translation by Dr. Charles Burney.

Meanwhile Blanche's long regency came to an end, and the young King, St. Louis, took her place, nominally. She was still the ruling power, however, and when Louis went to Palestine, in 1248, she regained full control. Thibault went with his young King, and was in the great Gaya defeat. When he returned to France there were several fresh complications to meet. Before the marriage between Prince John and Yolande de Bretagne could be solemnised the Prince died. Yolande's father, Mauclerc, had now no incentive to keep on friendly terms with the King and the Queen Mother, and he was working harder than ever, though with more subtlety and diplomacy, to overthrow the Throne. To win Thibault away, he offered him Yolande's hand. She was a fair maid, it is said, and had a great name, and a marriage of convenience being quite a matter of course in those days, Thibault agreed. (Indeed there *are* historians who insist that our hero's exalted devotion to Blanche did not prevent him from marrying *three times* altogether!) Perhaps he had found the Queen less gracious and more preoccupied on his return from Palestine, and realised the incontrovertible truth,—that she was a stateswoman first, and a gentle lady afterward. In fact it is possible that she may have grown tired of his rather exacting adoration;—and it required but little, as we have seen, to pique our wilful King, Count and Troubadour, Thibault of Navarre!

The day was set for his marriage with Yolande de Bretagne.

Suddenly a letter arrived from the King. Even one less familiar with the royal methods than Thibault could not have failed to see that it had been dictated by Blanche. The letter begged him to break off his approaching marriage,—"for the love of those dear to him in France."

Thibault bade farewell to Yolande, and departed for the French Court.

It is hard not to feel sorry for Yolande. Her youth seemed to be spent in preparations for bridals that never occurred.

From the foregoing incident it may be inferred that *La Reine Blanche* was something of what we might term to-day, in vulgar parlance, a "dog in the manger." She did not wish to wed the King of Navarre herself, but she would not dream of permitting him to wed Yolande de Bretagne.

Though nearly all of Thibault's songs were written for Blanche, they were not all written about her. The most famous of all his chansons,—perhaps one of the most famous songs of its kind ever written, has but the most slight and frivolous connection with love. It is the great "Chanson du Roy," or "Song of the King," and is written on the typical "pastourelle" model of the Troubadours. In simplicity and spontaneity,

both of words and music, it probably reaches the high-water mark of mediæval minstrelsy.

It begins in this fashion:

"As I rode ere dawn was winging,
'Twixt an orchard and a grove,
I a shepherdess heard singing,
And her song was all of love.
Thus began the maiden's lay:
'Love doth bind me tenderly!'
All my heart beat high and free,
And I cried, by hope made gay,
From my horse's back swift springing,
'Pretty one, good day to thee!'"

The song continues to portray the flirtation between the King and the pretty shepherdess. Finally he becomes impertinent, and she calls for her shepherd lover, Perrin. Perrin arrives, quite ready to thrash the royal lover, who hastily mounts his palfrey and rides away. The shepherdess calls after his flying figure tauntingly: "Cavaliers should never be so *bold!*"

There is a certain genial sarcasm in the original which it is almost impossible to translate. The music is too well known and well loved to need comment.

Thibault's last years passed less eventfully than his early ones. He studied a little, sang a little, rode, feasted and made merry a little, and spent a due portion of his time with his beloved lady, Queen Blanche.

As both grew older, the Troubadour's ardent songs gave place to occasional religious outbursts, as became a good Catholic King. He wrote hymns to the Blessed Virgin instead of love-songs to Blanche of Castille, and was happier in discussing with her the broad questions of the day than in pouring forth a ceaseless tide of passionate protestations.

With her head crowned with silver instead of gold, and looking more than ever a Reine Blanche,—a white queen,—the great and clever lady who had ruled France and inspired a genius, slipped softly and easily down the slanting roadway of years. When she was sixty-five, and before extreme old age had claimed or chained her indomitable personality, she died. Her death was in December, when the snow lay on the land. In the white time of the year *La Reine Blanche* was laid in state among the Kings and Queens of France.

A little over a year later Thibault followed her. Surely it was happiest for him. He would never have loved the sunset-time, and would have had small patience with the world when the lustiness of youth, the splendour of romance, and the savour of action had left it. He had been essentially a part of the world,—a part of its joys and its miseries, its excitements, disappointments, and great deeds. And to have grown old, with only memory to give him back the lost, robust delights of his young manhood, the absorbing game of conspiracies and thrones, and the inspiring influence

of his royal Lady,—this indeed would have been a lot most pitiful and out of harmony with his song of life.

But the big dumb Fate whom we are wont to revile has an ear for chords and discords. And so it happened that when the cup was barely drained, the lute hardly out of tune, the flowers just withered, and the Queen but a year dead,—he closed his eyes upon a smiling sky and went to sleep. And the chronicler of old said of him, with a rare tenderness: "He made the most beautiful songs, and the most delectable and melodious, that ever were made for singing, or fashioned for instruments by any man."

The histories have much to say of the King of Navarre. But for us he is something much better than a mere king: he is Thibault, the Troubadour.

THE HUNCHBACK OF ARRAS

ROBIN M'AIME

Rob - in.... loves me, loves but me;
Rob - in's asked me if his love I'll tru - ly
be. Rob - in's bought me daint - y things in
lov - er's fash - ion, Sung me ma - ny ten - der
songs to. .. prove his faith - ful pas - - sion.
Rob - in.... loves me, loves but me; Rob - in's
asked me if his love I'll .. tru - ly be!

VI

THE HUNCHBACK OF ARRAS

HE himself denied the suitability of his nickname "Li Bochu" or "Le Bossu," but his biographers insist that, if not actually a hunchback, he was at least somewhat malformed. To be sure "Bossu" was a title often applied to minstrels of the Middle Ages; nevertheless it is safe to assume that Adam de la Halle was physically one of Nature's mistakes. Mentally, he was all that could be desired. He said, in writing of himself, after his own odd fashion of speaking in the third person:

> "Personal beauty nor grace had he not,
> But he had beauty of wit
> And knew most gracefully all manners of song."

Gifted, sneering, poetical, sparkling little Bossu! You were out of place in the century which gave you birth. To-day we should hail you as a wit and reverence you as a master. Your caustic and sometimes audacious jests would be swallowed with avidity, and your deformity would add piquancy to your personality, instead of opening the mouths of your contemporaries for the issue of sneers and derision.

A poet, a dramatist, a wit, a composer, a singer, a mocker, a reformer, a libertine, a gallant, a revolutionist, a lover, a student, even, sporadically, a *religieux*, how could the thirteenth century be expected to understand him?

Adam de la Halle was born in 1240, according to the best authorities. Coussemaker, indeed, insists that the date was nearer 1220, but the consensus of opinion inclines to 1240, so let us accept the latter date without further debate.

Of his mother we know nothing, but his father's personality seems fairly accurately preserved in history. Maître Henri de la Halle was a well-to-do burgher of the town of Arras, capital of Artois in Picardy. Indeed he was a man of decided importance and held a social position rather unusual among the *bourgeoisie*. He was a burgher with definite aspirations and desires—one of which was that his son Adam should have every opportunity to distinguish himself and take a prominent place in the great world. He had a sufficiency of material goods and he cheerfully invested them in the education and bringing up of this delicate, brilliant and perverse boy.

Arras was a peculiarly vicious town, even in a day when laxity was the rule of life. The government and the people were continually at odds, and the air was hot with malice and fetid with scandal and immorality.

In later years, Adam, on the eve of departure, wrote as follows of his home and birthplace:

[1]"Arras, Arras! Town full of strife;—
With calumnies and hatred rife;
You were a noble town of yore;
Your fame, 'tis said, they will restore;
But unless God your manners mend
I see not who'll effect this end.
Gambling is all that you pursue,
So—fifty thousand times adieu!"

But although the day was to come when he could write thus scathingly of the delinquencies of Arras, he was part and parcel of them in his boyhood. "He was received," says one historian, "by the richest and most noble Seigneurs of Arras. They opened to him both house and purse, and admired him at their tables." It is evident that Adam must have been remarkably brilliant and witty even in his extreme youth, for certainly they could not have admired his poor bent form, and the record of the homage paid him by these great men of his town is testimony to his marvellous and precociously developed mentality.

Throughout his youth Adam plunged deeply and constantly into dissipation, and it is to this fact, doubtless, that we owe his subsequent bitter and brilliant denunciations of vice. He had gauged the depth or the shallowness of this mad life of pleasure to which Arras

[1]Translation by Henry Carrington, Dean of Bocking.

was given up, and could, therefore, excoriate it as an outsider could never have done.

There was no banquet but young Adam de la Halle was present,—no great gambling bout but his purse was upon the table. Where wine was drunk, quips exchanged, women wooed or fortunes lost,—Adam was always to be seen. He could not fight duels nor ride hunting, but when a brain could serve he was never missing. In the wildest scenes of revelry that made Arras notorious his twisted shoulders, pallid face and blazing eyes formed the most dominant note of the picture. His swift biting speech threaded the coarse jests of his companions like a whip of steel. It was said that the magnetism of his vivid eyes and the spell of his wonderful voice could woo a woman's heart away from the handsomest giant that ever wore a sword or sat a horse.

Maître Henri began to grow disturbed. That his son should have due experience in the great world was one thing, but that he should be supreme Master of the Revels in a town renowned for its lawlessness was quite another, and most alarming to a parental soul. So he began to speak seriously to Adam,—began to speak of art, letters, and music, and the mental training which might be obtained at the great monasteries, —began to speak of the future which was as strong as it was remorseless. He reminded the young man that, while youth was brief, life was sometimes known to

last a good while, and it was as well to look ahead and prepare one's self against the day when riotous living should have lost its first savour, and pleasure came to a man along less strenuous lines.

Change was the guiding motive-power of Le Bossu's life, so, as he was becoming weary of gambling and drinking, and had an insatiable love of novelty, he agreed to go to the Monastery of Vauxcelles, near Cambrai, and to cultivate his sparkling and erratic intellect in the sobering atmosphere of the cloister.

He had but one regret in leaving Arras. He should be separated from Marie. For Adam was almost on the verge of falling in love,—as much in love, that is, as one of his temperament could be. Neither Marie's surname nor her antecedents are on record. We only know from an old chronicle that she was "a beautiful person, richer in charms than in worldly advantages or fortune." She is spoken of by more than one historian as "La jolie demoiselle Marie," and Adam has enumerated her mental, spiritual and personal attractions in many poems both sentimental and satirical. Being poor in "worldly advantages and fortune," Marie did not please Maître Henri, and the course of true love bade fair to run rather roughly for the lovers,—if so they can be termed. It is more than probable that, up to the time of Adam's departure for Vauxcelles, he had paid but tentative and cursory tribute of attention to Marie. Doubtless, however, he

had succeeded in fascinating her with his wit and his personality, as he fascinated all women, in spite of being the Hunchback of Arras.

At about this time an unusual humility seems to have taken possession of Adam. Apparently he felt ashamed of the unquiet and unseemly life he had led since childhood, and recognised in the daring and malicious witticisms which his companions had praised so highly the elements of ill breeding, and an inherent lack of delicacy of thought.

In the "Farewell to Arras,"—a stanza from which was quoted a few pages back,—he says:

> [1]". . . Rude and empty was my mind,
> Discourteous, base and unrefined.
> My tender friend, much-loved and dear,
> I feel and show but little cheer.
> Deeply on your account I grieve,
> Whom I am forced behind to leave.
> You will be treasurer of my heart,
> Although my body must depart,
> Learning and science to attain,
> And be more worth,—so you shall gain!"

Alas! Adam was forever turning over new leaves,—but some of his new leaves were more discreditable than the old. Good or bad, however, he never kept to them long.

He left Arras filled with a deep distaste for the town and his erstwhile boon companions, and a pleas-

[1]Translation by Dean Carrington.

antly depressed affection for Marie. Doubtless his intention was to remain in the Monastery long enough to complete his education, then return to Arras, wed Marie, and settle down into a self-respecting burgher with a taste for versifying. He was, however, to pass through several phases before even approaching the beatific monotony which he contemplated so hopefully.

In the first place the monks made him warmly welcome in Vauxcelles. His fine mind and rare aptitude in all manner of studies delighted them, and the most learned of the Brethren gave him of the best their brains could yield, filling his impressionable soul with that knowledge-thirst which strengthens with appeasement. Then his quick and appreciative imagination began to see and seize the picturesque elements of his monastic life. His interest in his work gave place to the intuitive response of the poet and dramatist to fine theatrical effects. He took what the old book calls "The large course of study, composed of the Seven Arts," but it soon became an incidental feature of existence; the religious side of his life attracted him much more profoundly.

The beauty of the cloistered days appealed to the artist within him, and so wholly did he lose the memory of the warmer and sweeter world outside that he became a clerk in the Monastery, and finally entered upon the novitiate preparatory to taking Holy Orders.

It is much more than possible, however, that Adam at no single moment intended to become a monk. Probably his subtle, secret and analytical brain accepted—even created—this new situation from his usual motive of enthusiastic but well-balanced curiosity. Doubtless he began his novitiate with the knowledge that it would mean for him some new and valuable experiences and impressions. He was a dramatist preëminently, and as such had rare appreciation of the laws of contrast.

So behold him, kneeling piously in Vauxcelles, murmuring prayers in his beautiful voice, gazing upward with his marvellous eyes, and perhaps registering an impression now and then on the tablets of his sly and clever brain. Picture, likewise, the amiable and sympathetic monks, glancing with compassionate eyes toward the deformed shoulders under the dull-coloured habit of the neophyte.

For a time this new phase of life delighted him. He out-religioned the most religious of the Brethren, flung into his *Aves* and *Misereres* an enthusiasm new to the unimaginative monks, and took an artistic joy in silver dawns and crimson sunsets as filtered through monastic gratings. When the chill of the stones cut into his knees he knew the delight of the super-sensitive sensualist; he sniffed the incense with the appreciation of the intellectual poet. All this sounds paradoxical, —but throughout his days it was the will and pleasure

of Le Bossu to live paradoxes. With his soul he remembered the world; with his keenly strung nerves he responded to the appeal of the cloister.

But soon he had exhausted the possibilities of Vaux-celles. He had lived his life there with ardour and completeness, absorbed the atmosphere of the Church, and penetrated the somewhat unvaried individualities of the monks. He was tired of it.

Sin and Virtue, the World and Religion, had alike cloyed. He must have something new to inspire him now, thrill his blood, and beckon his adventurous spirit. But what? The answer sprang into his brain together with the question: Romance! The witch and priestess, elf and gypsy,—the queen of the big round world, and the enchantress of the hearts of men! Romance should be his goddess henceforward he vowed, and he turned a critical and frigid eye upon the shadow-crowded corridor and the silent courtyard. Yesterday he had found the one mysterious and the other peaceful—to-day they both were uninteresting.

His elusive sentiment for Marie was now taken out of his elastic and retentive inner-consciousness, and elaborated upon with the skill of the mechanic. A bit added here and there, and behold! Adam found himself successfully luxuriating in a splendid passion for "La jolie demoiselle" in Arras. He discovered quite suddenly that life was an empty and worthless affair without love, and decided almost as suddenly that he

must see Marie at once, and protest to her the extraordinary and deathless ardour of his devotion.

His vows? Adam placed his vows at scarcely higher value than do his historians. The monastic Bond? It only remained to be broken. Doubtless he worked himself up to an affectation of emotion very satisfactory to himself, during some solemn Vesper service. Or do we wrong him? Was there indeed some fugitive spark of the ineffable flame called Love kindling slowly in his cold heart? It may be. And for the good of his soul,—now jesting ironically somewhere in the Place of Departed Spirits,—we will hope that, for a brief space at least, Adam le Bossu sang the Love Song of the World.

Once determined upon his course nothing could prevail against him. The monkish habit was discarded; the garments in which he came to Vauxcelles were hastily donned by the light of the moon, pallidly reflected on the wall of his cell. In the hush of midnight, two hours before the first service, he stole down the still corridor. Perhaps a Brother stirred in his tired sleep, and murmured, "Who passes?" but some scampering rat or shivering whisper of wind answered the question, and the Hunchback crept on: past the entrance to the Chapel, for which in his new mood he had a laugh probably instead of a genuflexion; past the Refectory, with a retrospective grimace for the coarse and meagre fare which had so often been doled

out to him by the Cellarer; out by the great door and across the courtyard. . . . The trees stirred faintly, like a lisping of many hushed voices; the wind touched his face with a wordless welcome that brought a thrill. A minute later he was out on the highroad. The sleeping Monastery was behind him, a great exultation was in his heart, and his face was turned toward Arras.

Now, just at this time Arras was in a sad state, had Adam but known it. A wild confusion reigned there, made up of dissension and discontent, tyranny and insubordination,—a chaotic condition in which the Mayor and the citizens, the priests and the students alike were involved. Pamphlets were written bristling with invective against the government, influential citizens were banished under suspicion of complicity with these verbal revolutionists, and the air teemed with discord.

When Adam returned to his native town he found these conditions in existence, and his welcome but a wintry one,—cold, stormy and depressing. His father was not only amazed by his son's summary departure from Vauxcelles, but he was greatly exercised over the constant anxieties of every-day life. Every-day life in Arras just then was far from monotonous, and Maître Henri was growing too old to enjoy the smoke even of a bloodless battle.

Adam sought out Marie with dispatch, and told his

tale. He played his new rôle with his old skill and ardour. He convinced "La jolie demoiselle" that she was essential to his happiness, if not to his actual life! He made love with his brain, voice, eyes and soul. Of course Marie was conquered, and consented to become his wife.

This fact assured and her promise given, Adam, excited even beyond his usual high pitch, began to interest himself in the political conditions of his home. For the first time an opportunity offered itself for taking part in public affairs. He began to write pamphlets himself,—brilliant, daring pieces of work, the forerunners of some modern editorials. Neither God nor man escaped the searing red-hot points of his intellectual weapons. He reviled the Pope no less than he attacked the Government of Arras. And, not content with the introduction of human personages for the better dramatic development of his tirades, he called the figure of the Almighty into his pages to point by Divine concurrence the theories which he himself had evolved.

The result of all this was that he and his father were forced to fly from Arras to Douai, to escape being made public examples by the outraged and irate Mayor and his governing officials.

Adam decided to give up politics temporarily, having immensely enjoyed his first flight among them, nevertheless. He wrote to Marie,—calling her "Bèle

très douche amie chère (Beautiful, dear and very sweet love)"—and being in a genial humour, did his best to pacify and cheer poor Maître Henri, who was as ill-tempered just then as his son was amiable.

They remained away but a short time. The storm was soon lulled, and by the time they ventured back Arras was no worse and no better than usual. Promptly after this return Adam and Marie were married.

For a space Adam revelled in a dream of the consistency and hue of a sunset cloud. He lived in love, and looked on life through a shining web that was woven half of sunshine, half of Marie's bright hair. He saw the world reflected in her eyes, and her voice drowned for him the clamour of the tongues of men. He found the beating of her heart more inspiring than shouts of revelry, the sight of her tender face more wonderful than incense-clouded altars, the touch of her hand or lips more thrilling than the ebb and flow of revolutions.

Marie must have been a rarely sweet and fascinating woman, for she held her erratic husband for several years,—much longer than any one could reasonably have believed possible. Children came to them, and their life seemed tranquil and complete.

Suddenly, one day, Adam le Bossu walked out of his house and never came back.

Love and Marriage, like Dissipation, Religion and

Politics, had palled upon him. He had gone to Paris to devote himself to music and literature!

At this time his brain was acutely active, and he composed song after song, satire after satire, and drama after drama, with never-flagging inspiration. He wrote of himself in the third person, and introduced fanciful characters (like his famous "Fée Maglore," the evil genius) to typify the good and bad elements in his life. But despite these whimsicalities all his work of this period was frankly,—too frankly,—autobiographical.

In the treatise on Marriage, which appears in the guise of a dialogue in his "Play of Adam," he told the story of his love for Marie, holding it up to ridicule as only he had the skill and wit to do, exposing her to the jests of the public, and himself to the horror and disgust of posterity.

There are passages in this clever but unpardonable bit of work which rend our sympathies into a tattered web that is inadequate to cover the physical and moral malformations of the Hunchback of Arras.

Yet he could write charmingly, tenderly. We feel our kindly feelings being bought back grudgingly by the simplicity and grace of such lines as these:

"Thanks, Love, for all the sorrows soft and sweet,
That, mastering my heart, you wake in me,
For her,—the best and the most beautiful
A man could ever love or ever serve
Without deserving her. . . ."

To the lady of his heart (whoever she was at the time) he sings:

"Ah! I could never bring to you
The gracious, fair and gentle things
That you have caused to come to me;
For I have loved,—yea!—and desired. . . ."

He wrote delightful music, too; not only,—states one writer,—composing some of the most delicious *chansons* of mediæval times, but anticipating the spontaneous character of latter-day lyrics, and sowing the seeds both of Vaudeville and Opéra Comique.

Such brilliant work did he do that the Count of Artois (Robert II., nephew of St. Louis) installed him as his Court Composer and Singer. It was a great position, and Adam made great use of it. He was soon as efficient a courtier as he was a Master of Music and of Literature, and, with his slender bent frame sumptuously dressed, he was a conspicuous figure at all the great festivals and entertainments of the Artois Court.

From this time until his death Adam de la Halle worked unceasingly. He was one who, while seldom living deeply, always lived vividly. His loves, if brief, were ardent; his work, if superficial, was brilliant. He was a bad friend and a worse lover, but he had the gift of magnetism which held both friendship and affection long after he had ceased to wish for it. Through all the changes of his life, his dramatic

sense was paramount. He turned his poems and his political essays into miniature plays, and he lived even more theatrically than he wrote. But he possessed the ability and the will to work; dowered with almost all faults, human and otherwise, he yet lacked one—laziness. He never shirked, seldom rested, and burned up the fuel of his insufficient bodily strength in forty-six glittering years.

In 1282, by command of Philippe the Bold, the Comte d'Artois went with the Duc d'Alençon to Naples, to aid the Duc d'Anjou in avenging the Vêpres Siciliennes. Most of the Court of Artois went too, and, of course, Adam le Bossu. In the two Sicilies the Court was bored, for there was much time to wile away and not enough fighting to be really exciting. So Adam set himself the task of amusing and entertaining these gay beings, one of whom he now accounted himself. And so it came about that he wrote his masterpiece, the drama "Robin et Marion."

It was modelled on the theme of the ancient pastorale, but bears to it the relation which the finished orchestral suite has to its opening *motif*. "Robin" is a delightful achievement, even judging it apart from the day in which it was written. Of many mediæval works it is possible to say: "How wonderful—for the Middle Ages!" But to be able to say: "How wonderful! When was it written?" is the only test and the only tribute. "Robin et Marion" is a great work

to-day, even as it was a great work in 1282. It is as ageless as romance, and as cosmopolitan as comedy. Its dialogue reads almost as naturally as the scenes in a modern play, yet its old-world flavour is delicately and surely maintained throughout. Its lyrics are graceful, its melodies spontaneous, its dramatic action sufficiently swift to excuse the slender plot, and its humour as genuine as it is subtle.

The opening of the play discovers the pretty shepherdess, Marion or Marote, singing softly to herself the song, "Robin M'aime," of which the following is rather too free an adaptation to be called a translation:

"Robin loves me, loves but me;
Robin's asked me if his love I'll truly be.
Robin's bought me dainty things in lover's fashion,
Sung me many tender songs to prove his faithful passion,
True lovers we!
Hè, Robin! If thou lovest me,
For love's sake come to me!
Robin loves me, loves but me,—
Robin's asked me if his love I'll truly be!"

A Chevalier appears upon the scene, riding a fine palfrey, and recalling to our minds Thibault's "Chanson du Roy!" The dialogue runs as follows:

"Chevalier: Shepherdess, God give you good-day.
"Marion: God keep you, my Lord.
"Chev.: For love's sake, sweet maid, tell me for whom do you sing with such good-will:

"'Hè, Robin! If thou lovest me,
For love's sake, come to me!'

"*Mar.:* Fair sir, it is simply told: I love Robinet and he me. . . . Lord, suffer me to know what manner of beast you carry on your hand.

"*Chev.:* A falcon.

"*Mar.:* Will it eat bread?

"*Chev.:* No, only good flesh.

"*Mar.:* That beast! Truly?

"*Chev.:* Careful! It would not mind proving it. . . . Tell me, sweet shepherdess, have you ever loved a cavalier?

"*Mar.:* Fair sir, before you came, I knew not what cavaliers might be. Of all the men on earth I have only loved Robin. He comes night and morning, by long custom; he brings me cheese and milk,—and even now I carry next my heart a big piece of bread which he brought me to-day.

"*Chev.:* Say, then, sweet shepherdess,—would you come with me, mount my fair palfrey and ride away with me from the wood and the valley?

"*Mar.:* My Lord, mount your horse. He is not for me. . . . Your name?

"*Chev.:* Aubert.

"*Mar.:* My Lord Aubert, you waste your time. I shall love none but Robinet.

"*Chev.:* None, Shepherdess?

"*Mar.:* None, by my faith!

"*Chev.:* I a cavalier, and you a shepherdess!—Must I entreat you?

"*Mar.:* I shall never love you. Shepherdess am I, in good truth, but I have a lover who is handsome, good, merry and brave. What more could you offer?

"*Chev.:* Shepherdess, God give you joy."

He rides away, Marion singing "Tirili, tirila" after him, varying it with snatches from "Robin M'aime."

Later on in the play the Chevalier appears once more at a village gathering. He seeks a quarrel with Robin, knocks him down, and makes violent love to Marion, hoping that her lover's defeat will have shaken her loyalty. She, however, is more than ever violently opposed to his wooing, and he finally departs after a very good comedy scene. Marion flies to Robin's arms, scolding him furiously for his cowardice, but evidently loving him too well to even transiently regret the Chevalier.

The climax of the little play is the dance "La Tresque," which is led by Robin and Marion, and in which all the villagers join. La Tresque or "La Danse de Robin," as it has come to be called, is a dance without end. One may dance it forever, or at least as long as one has breath or strength. So a great many years ago they made a proverb,—which is still common in Artois and Flanders:

"Ch'est sans fin
Com' l' danse Robin,
(It is without an end
Like Robin's dance)."

An old English account of the play (written 1632) describes it as being "a merrie and extemporall song, or fashion of singing, whereto one is ever adding somewhat, or may at pleasure add what he list." Evidently Adam left much to the judgment of his singers, —which after all showed his intelligence. From that

broad "ad libitum" was born a freshness and spontaneity which was quite essential both to the musical and dramatic success of the work.

"Robin et Marion" was Adam's climax in life. In it he laid the corner-stone of a future music-drama, besides rounding out and developing the embryo song of the Middle Ages. After "Robin" he wrote very little. When he was forty-six he died in Naples, and was buried with immense pomp, and all the honours of the great, by his patron, Robert d'Artois.

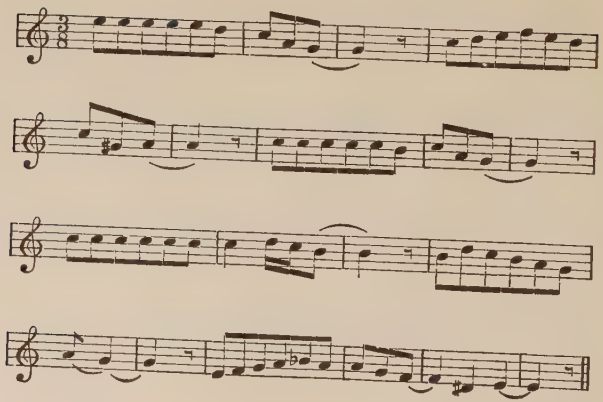
What became of his father, the excellent Maître Henri, or his wife, "la jolie Marie," and her children, we know not. Jehan Mados, a jongleur and the son of Adam's sister, speaks adoringly of "Maistre Adam li Bochu." But for that matter they all adored him, even while they distrusted his heart and feared his brain. Those who had least cause to love him cherished a secret worship for him through every complication. We may be certain that Marie inculcated in the hearts of her babies a loving reverence for their gifted father,—while he, doubtless, was whispering suave and witty speeches in the ears of Court ladies.

Ah, Adam de la Halle,—Adam le Bossu! What was your secret? Your ability might have won their admiration, and your achievements their respect;—but what won their love? Was there indeed some masked and muffled tenderness about you that the few had power to recognise? Or did Marie's love spring,

full grown, irrational and divine, from an over-faithful soul? No man shall ever answer the riddle; yet all men, even after these many years, can feel your spell and bow to it,—Adam le Bossu, Hunchback of Arras.

WITH THE CASTANETS

OLD SPANISH AIR



VII

WITH THE CASTANETS

SONG is not the product of cultivation but of inspiration, and the elements which make for lyrical excellence are such spontaneous qualities as may be noted in the street ballads of a nation oftener than in the works of her masters. So, in every land, the corner-stone of vocal melody has been laid by the Folk-Song. Not only has this peculiar branch of music a charm and freshness quite its own, but it is not seldom a gold-mine of real value, showing us a freedom of melody and an elasticity of development which it has taken the various schools of composition many hundreds of years to achieve. The folk-songs of the most ancient days have the infectious quality of the best class of modern popular music. In an age when Harmony was still an unexplored country, and learned Descanters and students were framing laborious airs as a mason builds an important and imposing structure of well-measured stone blocks,—the gypsies and the ballad-mongers, the jongleurs and the careless country-folk were creating the Melody of the Future—the Folk-Song.

Song would seem to be one of the most universally instinctive ways of expressing joy or sorrow that the world knows or has ever known. From the beginning of time, men and women have sung,—without knowledge or teaching, and guided only by their hearts. And the songs that they have sung have been good songs, and such as no composer has ever learned how to copy, though many have tried. For Song, as distinct from Music in general, is emotional,—purely, utterly, supremely elemental. It is, in its inherent essentials, as primitive as passion or self-preservation. And therefore it is universal, simple, and not to be counterfeited.

The serenades and love-songs of the world were born from the ardour of lovers, grew to fullness of being in the warmth of languorous days and the magic of silver nights,—and died on the lips of the beloved. The lullabies grew in the hearts of mothers, with the growth of the new life, and found their crown of honour when they were crooned, in tremulous proud murmurs, above the mystery of drowsy baby eyes. The dirges were first the broken laments of mourners,—swelling, in time, to a wailing protest, and celebrating the unvarying tragedy of loss,—the inconsolable ache in the souls of those who had been forgotten by the grim, shadowy Visitor.

Such things required no harmonic knowledge, nor yet any great genius in the art of making melodies.

One had no need to be a musician; it was only necessary to have lived.

A few tears, a few kisses, a few heart-throbs, a few ripples of laughter; a few sighs, and sobs, and solemn farewells, and love-whispers; a few pauses full of pain or rapture; the heavy tread of mourners bearing a white Mystery to Mother Earth; the feverish hurrying steps of dancers, keeping time to their own restless pulses; a prayer, broken by a blush or a hope,—a dream hushed by a memory. . . . And the Folk-Song was made.

Among all the ancient folk-songs that sprang into vivid growth all over the speaking earth in the early ages, there probably was no national lyric music which was so truly great as that of Spain. George Ticknor declares that the Minnesinger and Troubadours were over-refined, and in their extreme precision of notation and delicacy of musical art missed the fire and vitality necessary for really great songs. He insists that the Spanish Folk-Song of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries reached points which neither Trouvère nor Minnesänger ever imagined. In no sense does he extol the Spanish Art-Form beyond that of other lands, but he says that the music of the people is more innately vigorous and spontaneous,—". . . Embodying the excited poetical feeling that filled the whole nation during that period when the Moorish

power was gradually broken down by an enthusiasm that became at last irresistible."

The bitter struggle between the Spanish and Moorish elements during the Oriental invasion and habitation is a subject which has been drained dry by historians, essayists, poets, and the makers of plays. It is unnecessary for us to dwell upon it here, since the matter concerns us only in so much as it may have influenced the songs of Castille and Galicia. Very slight was the Oriental colouring given to the national music of Spain, for the hostility between the two peoples was so strong as to repel the possibility of any inter-racial influence whatever. But the effect of the Mohammedans' presence on Spanish soil was felt in the seething revolt and passion of the Spanish people and thus in their lyrics.

The times were fiery and unquiet. One great national crisis followed another, and the impressionable hearts all over the country beat at top speed year after year. There seemed no cessation in the whirl of bloodshed, tyranny, struggle, rebellion, treachery and pain. And this turbulence and unrest, this danger and madness eddied through the current of their music, creating a wild, strange trick of melody, and a rhythm as uneven as waves driven upon the shore by storm winds.

Yet through all the restless and even violent measures ran the blood of Spain—which is warm blood, and sensuous, with a separate pulse for love, and another

for inconsequent delight. So, however fiery and wild the melody, it nevertheless carries its sub-current of languorous Southern passion. It is as though beneath the turbid, seething rush of wind-lashed waters one could catch glimpses of a great gorgeous sea-serpent painted in many glimmering hues, and moving slow, shining coils far below the tempest's reach.

To Spain pre-eminently belongs the Dance Song. This wonderful type of folk-song combined music, poetry, motion, and sometimes pantomimic action as well. The latter are called "Danzas habladas," and are less popular than the simple Dance Song.

There were, in the years of which we are writing, countless dances in Spain,—all seductive and beautiful, all accompanied by the intoxicating castanet-emphasis, and "all," says Guevara, "invented by the Devil." There was the Zarabanda, named, we learn from Mariarea, "for La Zarabanda, a devil in woman's shape that lived in Seville." There was the Fandango, in which the castanet or *crotola* (a kind of castanet) was peculiarly prominent; the Xacara,—a sort of drinking-song, with incidental dancing, recited, in what was called the Rogue's Dialect, and by that class of roysterers known also as the Xacaras; the Rondeña, the Malagueña, the Cachua, the Gitana, the Bolero, the Gambeta, the Caballero, the Alemaña, the Zapateta, the Jota, the Bayle, and a dozen others. Some of these dances received their names from the

places where they originated, others from the favourites who danced them. But most characteristic of all was the Seguidilla,—that magical delirium of music and motion which shall typify Spain to the end of time as it has from the beginning.

An old book by Zamacola describes the Seguidilla in this way:

"So soon as two young people of the opposite sexes present themselves, standing face to face at a distance of about two varas" (that is, sixty-eight inches) "the *ritornelo* or prelude to the music begins; then the Seguidilla is insinuated by the voice. . . . The guitar follows, playing a *pasacalle*" (popular street-song) "and at the fourth bar the Seguidilla begins to be sung. Then the dance breaks out with castanets or *crotolas*, running on for a space of nine bars, with which the first part concludes. The guitar continues playing the *pasacalle*. . . . At the close, the voice, the instruments and the castanets cease all at once, and, as if impromptu, the room remaining in silence, and the dancers standing immovable in various beautiful attitudes, which is what we call *bien parado* (well-stopped). . . ."

The words of the Dance Songs were sung in a sort of sing-song recitative, that occasionally broke into sudden melody. These words were called the *Coplas*, and there are many coplas which are both beautiful and witty. Most of the colour and character of the

melodies was given by the dancers and the dance-music,—always most rich and full of fire and poetry.

Out in the woods the Homeless Folk loved the Dance Songs as well as did the gay people of Seville and Madrid. The country people sang and danced them at twilight, the villages swayed to their measures, the whole air of Spain quivered with the magical, wonderful infection of the Seguidilla. Then there was the *Chacona* (Chaconne)—a dance which was very popular at one time, and was used as an accompaniment to some of the best known and best loved of the street ballads. Some authorities contend that its name is derived from the Basque word *chocuna*,—which means "pretty" or "charming." Others declare that it comes from *Cieco*,—the blind. This latter supposition is the more interesting for the following curious reason: The ballads and folk-songs of Spain, never having been written down, have been preserved in their entire and accurate form only by the *blind beggars* of the city streets. What fancy, chance or superstition originally was at the root of this immutable tradition we do not know, but it is one of the accepted facts of musical history and of Spanish custom.

And to this day, if one wishes to hear the old folk-songs sung in the form in which they were sung six hundred years ago, one must go to the blind beggars of Madrid and Seville.

With the melodies and words entrusted to the mem-

ories of these sightless ones, and the dance-steps imitated by every child as soon as he or she could toddle, the national folk-music of Spain was preserved century after century. And no other music probably, save possibly that of the Magyar people, has altered so little with the development and changes of the years.

But besides the Dance-Songs, there were two other characteristic manifestations of lyrical sentiment. One was the Patriotic Song,—usually eulogising "the Cid," the national hero,—and the other was the Ballad. And these also were preserved and guarded by the blind wanderers of the streets.

Who shall dare attempt to do justice to the Ballads of Spain without a pen dipped in enchanted fluid? Never were folk-songs so simple, and never were any so delicious. They have a twist of easy colloquial humour very surprising when one considers their antiquity, and their romance is invariably of the piercingly human quality so rare in Provençal literature. They are direct in idea and in expression. Though the thought may be a delicate and subtle one there is never a waste of good words in an attempt to reproduce unimportant gradations of meaning. And they are original,—definitely, poignantly, vitally original. Here, for instance, is the famous ballad "Fonte frida, Fonte frida." It represents some half-savage and bereaved woman, violently repulsing the love that is secretly tempting her heart:

[1]"Cooling fountain, cooling fountain,
Cooling fountain full of love,
When the little birds all gather
Thy refreshing power to prove,
All except the widowed turtle
Full of grief,—the turtle dove.

"There the traitor nightingale
All by chance once passed along,
Uttering words of basest falsehood
In his guilty treacherous song:

"'If it please thee, gentle lady,
I thy servant-love would be.'

'Hence,—begone, ungracious traitor!
Base deceiver, hence from me!

"'I nor rest upon green branches,
Nor amid the meadow's flowers;
The very wave my thirst that quenches
Seek I where it turbid pours.

"'No wedded love my soul shall know,
Lest children's hearts my heart should win,
No pleasure would I seek for,—no!
No consolation feel within.

"'So leave me sad, thou enemy,
Thou foul and base deceiver—go!
For I thy love will never be,
Nor ever,—false one,—wed thee;—no!'"

And here is a charming dialogue between two

[1]Translation by George Ticknor.

lovers who have been separated through treachery, and are just beginning to find it out. In the original it is known as "Rosa fresca, Rosa fresca," and may have served as a model for the "Fonte frida" just quoted. The man begins:

[1]"'Rose fresh and fair, Rose fresh and fair,
That with love so bright doth glow,
When within my arms I held thee,
I could never serve thee, no!
And now that I would gladly serve thee,
I can no more see thee, no!'

"'The fault, my friend, the fault was thine,—
Thy fault alone, and not mine, no!
A message came, the words you sent,
Your servant brought it, well you know.
And nought of love or loving bands
But other words indeed it said:
That you, my friend, in Leon's lands
A noble dame had long since wed;—
A lady fair as fair could be,
Her children bright as flowers to see.'

"'Who told that tale, who spoke those words,
No truth he spoke, my lady, no!
For Castille's lands I never saw,
Of Leon's mountains nothing know,
Save as a little child, I ween,
Too young to know what love should mean.'"

As has been said already, the chief hero of the mediæval patriotic songs of Spain was the "Cid," and

[1]Translation by George Ticknor.

since it was so we should pause for a brief moment to consider this curious and picturesque figure of ancient days.

Roderigo, or Ruy, Diez de Bivar was born in Bivar, near Burgos, in 1040, and died in Valencia in 1099, after a sufficiently exciting career. He held sway over large numbers of vassals, both Christian and Mohammedan, and from them received the title "Mio Cid." The word is derived from the *Seyyid* of Arragon, which means "Master," and the phrase Mio Cid means literally Monseigneur, and is merely a picturesque way of indicating that he was an over-lord of power. He began to show a predilection for battle, murder, and sudden death while he was still very young, and at the outset of his career received great happiness from killing a foreign champion in a tourney. To follow the steps of his long and blood-stained life would require much space and a love for horrors; suffice it to say that his prowess in repulsing the Moors and his many other valiant deeds won for him the title not only of "Cid," but of "El Campeador,"—which may mean either Challenger, or Champion, or both. In the war between Sancho and Alfonso, the sons of Fernando I., the Cid gave his allegiance to the former. When Sancho came to the throne, Roderigo defended and browbeat him in a loyal but characteristic manner. At the Siege of Zamora Sancho was stabbed in the back, and Alfonso was made King, *faute de mieux*,—

though his people were far from enthusiastic. When he was crowned, it was the Cid who made him *swear publicly that he had had no hand in his brother's murder!* The implied suspicion hurt Alfonso in the eyes of his subjects, and he never forgave Roderigo. Nevertheless, he made for him a match which came close to being royal,—wedding him to Ximena, the brave and beautiful daughter of the Count of Oviedo. The semi-barbaric sentiment of the Middle Ages is voiced in one old ballad which makes Ximena ask the King to give her as wife to El Campeador because he has had the courage and the strength to kill her redoubtable father!

Ximena is described by the old historians and romancers alike as being "fit, in body as in mind, to mate with El Campeador." High praise, for the Cid was a man whose robust mentality and great physical strength were far beyond the standards even of that period of universal superlatives. The Cid and Ximena were a model pair of lovers, inasmuch as their years of wedded life amid precarious days and imminently dangerous nights, seemed but to strengthen the firm-fibred cord which bound them in mutual love and understanding.

After an exciting record the day came when the Cid could not go to battle with his men. He lay ill in Valencia, with the Moors outside the city gates. He sent his troops out to meet them, but the whole

army was cut to pieces near the city walls. The Moors—the Almorabides they were,—spared but a crushed handful who stumbled back into Valencia to pant the news. When their master heard it he rose to his feet in his agony, and then fell, stark dead. Ximena held the city for a time, while the Cid lay dead, and his few remaining followers shivered and whimpered under her stern directions. But at last she determined to make no further attempt, and prepared to escape from the city.

Then the little band,—all that was left of what had once been the army of the Challenger,—left Valencia, presenting a strange and terrible picture. For they led a great war-horse, and on him was sitting the body of El Campeador, straight and stiff, in full armour, with his great sword Tinoz laid across the horse's neck before him. And the Moors, seeing this wonderful thing, cried out, "The dead hath come to life!" and fled wildly away in all directions. And the men passed on, leading the great war-horse with the dead body of their master.

Pool, in his "Story of the Moors," successfully explodes the romancers' theories concerning the ideal and heroic qualities of the Cid. He pictures him as a plunderer and a blackguard, a lover of carnage and a despoiler of cities. But he admits the genuine if brutal generosity and courage of the man, and no one has ever denied his value as a picturesque historical figure.

One can readily understand how such a person and such a career should have appealed to the emotional natures of the Spanish people, and how dearly they must have rejoiced in its theatrical elements. For, beyond all else a love for things dramatic was a ruling power in the lives of these mediæval Spaniards.

Every one, whether he could or not, made plays, and even acted in them. One sheep-shearer became quite famous for his skill in dramatic effects, and a tailor in Madrid, who cut the long mantles for the Spanish gallants, also won a decided reputation as a dramatist.

Lope de Vega, a playwright of old-world renown, wrote in his "*Gran Sultana*":

> "There ne'er was a Spanish woman yet
> But she was born to dance!"

He might have added that there never was and never would be a Spanish man or woman who was not born to *act*. It is in their blood, and comes only second to their love-making and their dare-devil bravery. Of many and strange sorts were the dramatic concoctions of that day. There was one ghastly affair called the "Dance of Death," in which Death, as a festive skeleton, invited the world to his revels. Gay music accompanied this cheerful invention, making the effect, says the chronicler, "most impressive and dreadful."

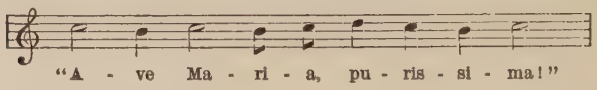
There was a certain merry prelate called Juan Ruiz,

who lived and died in the first half of the fourteenth century. He was the Archpriest of Hita, near Guadalajara, and he wrote a rather lengthy dramatic effusion, purporting to be a devout work, but only too evidently the résumé of a gay though somewhat disillusioned life. The theme was not new even then,—the eternal struggle between earthly and divine love,—and though he made for it a pious ending, "the work," —says the historian, "is a book of *buen amor*." It is chiefly interesting from the fact that lyrical music played a prominent part in its production. The chronicle says that the action and text were often interrupted by *Cantigas*, or songs; notably "The Song of Scholars," and "The Song of the Blind." Juan Riaño in his "Notes on Ancient Spain," says that the Archpriest introduced, both by reference and indicated use, great numbers of mediæval musical instruments as well.

Even when they were not ostensibly acting, these children of Arragon and Castille managed to be theatrical. Whether a lover was touching the mediæval equivalent for a guitar beneath his lady's window,—or a black-eyed girl was dancing in the market-place; whether a man was stabbing another, or marching away in gay costume to the wars; whether they were burning people at the stake or besieging the laboratory of such an innocent alchemist as Don Enrique, Marquis of Villena,—Spain always con-

trived to be spectacular and picturesque. Sun or moon, stars or the torches in the street, served for footlights. Give them a melody,—something to stir the soul and the pulses,—and a sympathetic audience, and they could win the heart from the coldest breast, and play a drama which thrilled and astounded themselves most of all.

All that they did was artistic and effective. Even the watchmen going about the streets at night had such quaint and musical calls as the following:



When in 1323, in Toulouse, on the Garonne, the City Magistrates decided to found a Music Guild, how did they go about it? Being keenly alive to the charm of humour they made a pretty comedy out of it, christened themselves: "*Sobregayer Companhia dies Sept Trobadors de Tolosa* (the Very Gay Company of the Seven Troubadours of Toulouse)!" They sent forth a letter to the world at large summoning all poets and singers to come to Toulouse on May-day in 1324, "there to contest with joy of heart for the prize of a golden violet."

Raimon Vidal, the Trouvère, won the prize, with a Hymn to the Madonna, and, most appropriately, they made him a "*Doctor of the Gay Saber,*"—whatever that may mean!

The episode was very Spanish;—as Spanish as the following folk-song:

[1]"Her sister, Miguela,
Once chid little Jane,
And the words that she spoke
Gave a great deal of pain:

"'You went yesterday playing,
A child like the rest,
And now you come out
More like other girls dressed.

"'You take pleasure in sighs,
In sad music delight,
With the dawning you rise,
And sit up half the night.

"'When you take up your work
You look vacant and stare,
And gaze on your sampler
But miss the stitch there.

"'You're in love, people say,
Your actions all show it.
New ways we shall have
When mother shall know it!

"'She'll nail up the windows
And lock up the door;
Leave to frolic and dance
She will give us no more.

[1]Translation by George Ticknor.

"'Old aunt will be sent
To take us to Mass,
And stop all our talk
With the girls as we pass.

"'And when we walk out
She will bid the old shrew
Keep a faithful account
Of all our eyes do;

"'And mark who goes by,
If I peep through the blind,
And be sure and detect us
In looking behind.

"'Thus for your idle follies
Must I suffer too,
And, though nothing I've done,
Be punished like you!'

"'Oh, Sister Miguela,
Your chiding pray spare,
That I've troubles you guess,
But not what they are.

"'Young Pedro it is,
Old Juan's fair youth,
But he's gone to the wars,
And where is his truth?

"'I loved him sincerely,
I loved all he said,
But I fear he is fickle,
I fear he is fled.

"'He is gone of free choice,
Without summons or call,
And 'tis foolish to love him
Or like him at all!'

"'Nay, rather do thou
To God pray above,
Lest Pedro return,
And again you should love,'

"Said Miguela in jest,
As she answered poor Jane,
'For when love has been bought
At the cost of such pain,

"'What hope is there, sister,
Unless the soul part,
That the passion you cherish
Should yield up your heart?

"'Your years will increase,
And so will your pain,
And this you may learn
From the proverb's old strain:

"'"If, when but a child,
Love's power you own,
Pray *what* will you do
When you older are grown?"'"

They really were a charming people. When one reads of their burning all Don Enrique's valuable books "because they related to Magic and unlawful Arts," one feels somewhat out of sympathy with their methods. The same is true of the chronicles of the

peculiar practices of the Inquisition,—in which the Troubadours suffered seriously. But gleams of light like the romance of Macias El Enamorado reconcile one to all or anything.

If he had any other name no man knows it to-day;—Macias the Lover he is called in Spanish history and Spanish literature. He is a very popular figure; though all that he ever did,—so far as the records tell us,—was to sing. He sang steadily and ceaselessly and contentedly, celebrating the loveliness of his chosen lady. His master was the Marquis de Villena. The Marquis had not yet fallen in disrepute with the Church on account of suspected necromancy. And the lady whom Macias loved was of the princely household. Of course Macias, being only an esquire, though a Galician gentleman, could not be permitted to wed the lady, but he went on singing to her indefatigably. Meanwhile they married her to a Knight of Porcuna. But still Macias kept on singing about her, singing to her, singing at her. The Knight of Porcuna appealed to Don Enrique, who, in his turn, appealed to Macias. The Marquis remonstrated, threatened, commanded and requested. Macias bent a respectful knee before his master. But he went on singing. Finally, as the Knight of Porcuna was becoming unbalanced from rage Don Enrique was forced to exercise his right as Grand Master of the Order of Calatrava, and put Macias in prison. But Macias

kept on singing even in prison. To the bare walls of his donjon-cell he warbled his melodious praises of his lady all day long,—and part of the night.

One day the Knight of Porcuna wandered along outside the prison window and peered in. Macias was sitting with a beatific smile upon his lips, singing a soft and very pretty love-song about the Knight of Porcuna's wife. He sang on and on in an ecstasy of emotion till the Knight could bear it no longer. So he threw a dart at him through the bars of the prison window, and killed him in the middle of a note. Such was the life and death of Macias the Lover, whose one fault seemed to be that he lacked temperance in song.

That story is intensely Spanish, from first to last! It is true that Macias was rather a wonderful figure in the annals of his time, inasmuch as he was loyal. Constancy was not a shining nor conspicuous virtue among the gallants of those fierce, gay, wonderful old days. Love came and went with the speed of the flying hours. In a land and a time when neither man nor woman could be certain of to-morrow, it was best to drink, eat, dance and love while it was possible. In those days every parting was apt to be the last, and it was well not to leave one's sword too far away at any time. Women laughed and danced the Seguidilla with men that they might never be permitted to see again. Men drank deep and blundered boisterously through the Xacara, with the prospect of death or

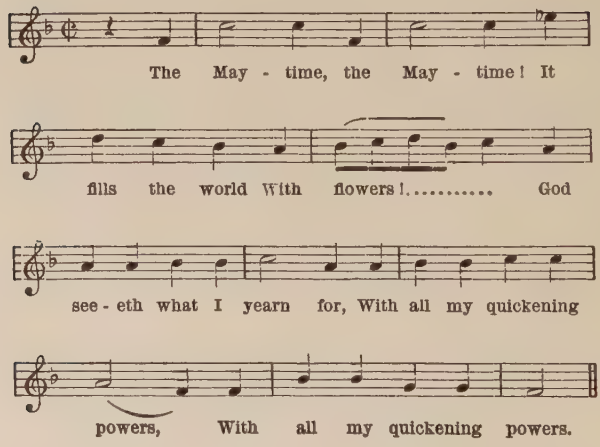
torture on the morrow. There was the light echo of dance-music mingling with the clanking tramp of armed men. There were kisses snatched with bravado on the very threshold of the Tribunal of the Inquisition.

They lived fast in those days, and but a short time. And somehow into their Dance-Songs and their Ballads they managed to put the spirit of their race,—the reckless, lavish squandering of to-day,—the careless, laughing defiance of to-morrow; the superstition, the humour, the artificiality, and the passionate tenderness of the people's soul. In the *coplas* which have been preserved we find a wonderful versatility and freshness of imagery and sentiment, but, as an example, there is one which is preëminently significant. It is very brief, and holds not a particularly admirable sentiment, but it is essentially Spanish. And you must think of it as being recited by a laughing, dark-eyed youth of Seville, while his newest love laughs in return, and flashes her reckless sympathy in a glance. And you must fancy it punctuated by the stirring, maddening, irresistible, restless click of the castanets:

"On Monday I fall in love,
On Tuesday I say so,
On Wednesday I declare my suit,
On Thursday I win my sweetheart,
On Friday I make her jealous,
And on Saturday and Sunday—
I hunt for a new love!"

A MAKER OF SONGS AND SHOES

ANCIENT MAY SONG


The May - time, the May - time! It
fills the world With flowers!..... God
see - eth what I yearn for, With all my quickening
powers, With all my quickening powers.

VIII

A MAKER OF SONGS AND SHOES

THAT the old order is bound to change is a tolerably well-established fact; but from the Troubadours, the singers of folk-songs, the makers of plaintive melodies and love-verses, and the rest of the romantic lyricists of the Southern world, it is a very far cry indeed to the Meistersinger of Germany. And between the *chansons* of the Troubadours, and the Mastersongs which grew to be accepted standards, the gulf seems even greater. Yet the history of Songs shows us that, after the era of minstrels, the treasure of song passed next into the guardianship of the Mastersingers.

The Minnesänger ("Love-Singer"), a sober Teutonic copy of the Troubadour, Trouvère, Trobadore, Trovatore, Bard and Minstrel of other lands, had held gentle sway in the petty courts of the feudal lords of ancient Germany, for his allotted number of years. Then his delicate art, never meant for endurance nor strain, began to fail before the turbulent times which seized upon Northern Europe. With the nobles at war one against the other, and the great feudal castles the scenes of dissension, siege and bloodshed instead of

courtly Song-Contests, the Minnesinger disappeared. Art, the erstwhile patron of princes and frequenter of Courts, came to the safe and peaceful towns which were not peopled with men sufficiently exalted for savagery, and took shelter under the somewhat pompous protection of the burgher class.

In 1380 one Heinrich von Meissen died in Maenz. He it was whose gracious and lovely songs in honour of woman had won for him the title of "*Frauenlob* (Praise of Women)." And as Heinrich Frauenlob is he known to-day. He was the last of the Minnesinger of Germany, and the founder of the Meistersinger, or Mastersingers. He is the recognised connecting link between the old order and the new, and as such is a figure of great interest and importance in musical history.

When he died he was borne to his grave by women only. All the wives and maidens of Maenz followed weeping, and, according to the ancient custom,—a frank survival of Paganism,—great quantities of rare and costly wines were poured upon the sod that covered him.

Born in Meissen, he had made Maenz his home, and there founded a Guild of Singers. They had undertaken the reformation of lyrical music—then represented by the comparatively free and inspirational Folk-Songs sung by the Minnesinger,—and its development into a fine art and an exact science.

They called themselves Mastersingers, and any man daring to aspire to membership was forced to undergo the strictest sort of examination in music, poetry, and vocalisation. Accuracy, industry, and painstaking care seemed to be the main features of the Mastersinger's art. What they accomplished was of inestimable value to the world at large, undoubtedly, but alas for the spontaneous, variable, ever-changing and, therefore, utterly inaccurate lyrics of the world which had been stormed by this relentless pedantry! They flew away like birds and butterflies, hid in remote pastoral places, and eluded the ears of music-lovers for centuries.

The Goddess of Song, deserting these vagrants and fugitives, had bent her neck to the yoke of Rules and Laws. *Kunst* (Art) at an early date replaced inspiration, and though the result of the care and toil of these mediæval pedants is the finest Art Song in the world, they themselves, with rare exceptions, seem unsympathetic and even exasperating.

The new order of Song flourished more or less successfully for four centuries,—one branch remaining active until 1839! Various men won eminence in its exercise,—notably Rosenblüt, Heinrich von Mugeln, Adam Puschmann (Hans Sachs's pupil), Hadlaub, Behaim, Brandt, Folz, Muscatblüt, Fischart and Till Eulenspiegel. But only one made for himself a name that was quite immortal: Hans Sachs, of Nuremberg.

He was a cobbler, and he wrote over 6,050 works—4,275 of which were *Meisterlieder!*

Without such vitalising principles as came from the work of men like Hans Sachs, the Meistersinger could have lived and laboured but a few decades. The art which is made to endure must be a living art, and the *Meistersang* was in itself but little better than a skeleton,—the skeleton of the dead Folk-Song. But Genius, the one great creative factor in all forms of art, made a brain for the skeleton, and then a heart, and finally a soul; and suddenly the skeleton was a skeleton no longer, but a living, breathing being of flesh and blood,—the Art Song. And this thing was done not by the pedantry nor the studied rules of the Mastersingers, but by the few rare but signal geniuses among them; of whom Hans Sachs, the cobbler, was the greatest.

Like all important movements, the growth and development of the Mastersingers' Art Song was very slow. The great Mastersingers' Contests began in informal meetings among musical burghers on dull winter evenings,—meetings during which songs were sung, poems recited, stories told, and rules for singing and composition discussed. As the rules multiplied and the burghers gained proficiency and assurance in the new craft, the cast-iron Guilds formed themselves, and the *Meistergesang* was established.

This was all during the fourteenth century. By the

fifteenth the thing was done, and at Colmar, Frankfort, Mainz, Prague, Breslau, Strassburg, Augsburg, Ulm, Regensburg, Nuremberg, and indeed every city of standing or size, the new schools of composition had been instituted.

Nuremberg was the heart and shrine of the Mastersong, and is to-day acknowledged as one of the musical temples of the past. Pilgrims go there, visit St. Katherine's, where the formal contests of the Mastersingers were held, see the quaintly decorated cabinet that hangs upon the church wall and bears the portraits of four masters as well as a stiff religious painting, and indulge in dreams of the dead days as they pass through the streets once trod by Albrecht Dürer and Hans Sachs.

The members of the Guild there, though unimaginative and far from inspired, were men of intelligence and character. Most of them were tradesmen or petty burghers, but they gave at least half their busy lives to the art which they were pleased to call theirs exclusively. It seems to have given them pleasure to elaborate upon their own restrictions, if so paradoxical a phrase be permissible! Their rules, narrow and strict as they were, were always being made more contracted and more rigid, and their artistic work was done in a cut-and-dried fashion which one writer describes as "grotesque pedantry."

Their care in being correct and scholarly in all that

they did resulted in innumerable humorous effects. For one thing, they were always most conscientiously accurate in their Scriptural excerpts and quotations, and very careful to make proper acknowledgment of the sources of the texts. So, when a verse from the Bible was set to music, the name of the book and the number of the chapter were included in the song! For example, when they set the twenty-ninth chapter of Genesis to music, the composition began in this style: "*Genesis am neun und Zwanzigsten nus bericht wie Jacob floh vor sein Bruder Esau,*" etc., etc.,—all carefully set to music!

Wagner's comic enumeration of the ridiculously named "Tones" and "Modes," made use of by the Mastersingers in composing their songs ("*Die Meistersinger,*" Act I.), is really much less exaggerated than most persons guess. For the dryest possible combinations of notes, this, the most unimaginative body of musicians conceivable, had the following amazing names: The Blue Tone, the Red Tone, the Rosemary Tone, the Yellow Lily Tone, the Nightingale Tone, the Maidenly Reserve Tone, the Blue Corn-flower Tone, the Ape Tone, the Pointed Arrow Tone, the Glutton Tone, the Wall-flower Tone, the Weaver's Song, and the Melody of Roses!

There were also the Long Tones and Short Tones, and many more standard melodies,—all of equal dulness and dreariness to our ears.

In the days of the Minnesinger, the word "Tone" applied only to the rhythm or metre, the air being called the melody. But the Meistersinger used Tone to describe the tunes invented by the more creative brains among them, and accepted them not only as models of excellence, but as pegs on which striving singers might hang any newly-chosen words.

Any one of the Standard Tunes,—that named for the Ape, the Glutton, the Corn-flower, or any other,—might be taken by a lyrical aspirant, and twisted to fit the Biblical verse upon which he had decided. It may be mentioned here, by the bye, that all the words of the Mastersingers' songs were obliged to be of a Scriptural order. No secular subjects were admitted to the ultra-purified atmosphere of the *Meistergesang!*

The question of originality was treated in a remarkably odd manner by the Guild. The freedom with which the Standard Tones might be used,—with such metrical alterations as the merest beginner in music might effect, would seem to argue that individual creation was not ardently encouraged,—rather, indeed, that a premium was set upon stagnation, and all incentive toward anything save a mere mechanical following of others' ideas was totally lacking. As a matter of fact, the conditions which prevailed were of quite a contrary order.

While the habit of musical thought was encouraged

by the wide and almost promiscuous use of the model Tones, no man who had not himself created one or more Tones could be admitted to the inner sanctuary of the Guild. He might be a Singer—a title of honour, and one much coveted,—but he could not be a Mastersinger. Says Wagner's "David":

> "The poet who, from his own brain,
> To words and rhymes discovered by himself,
> Can, for these Tones, create a new melody,—
> He as a Mastersinger is recognised!"

It is natural that the only conception which the great public has of the character and personality of Hans Sachs is the conception offered by Richard Wagner. The accuracy of this conception is possible, but not certain. The Sachs of Wagner is that rare being, a philosopher, an artist, a poet, a commoner, and a genial Romanticist. He alternately sings, jests, philosophises, and makes shoes. Only one thing we never see him do and that is write. And we know that the real Hans Sachs left behind him musical and literary compositions to the tune of 6,050—and more! But a Sachs who, in addition to the charming combination of attributes given him by Wagner, possessed the qualifications of a profound scholar and man of letters, would be a trifle too suggestive of blue roses and moons attained!

In any case, if the real Sachs who cobbled shoes in

Nuremberg in the fifteenth century, and wrote with a prolific ease paralysing even to the hurrying modern world, was a less engaging person than he who sings "Evchen, Evchen, Schlimmes Weib!" to our unqualified joy,—he must nevertheless have been a delightful being.

Though he affiliated himself closely and irrevocably with the Mastersingers' art, he nevertheless found ways of infusing an enormous amount of individuality and spontaneity into what he did. As a matter of fact, he confessed that he considered that in his Master Songs was the worst work of his career. But this is decidedly open to question. Neither bolts nor bars nor even Guild restrictions can shackle genuine inspiration. Whatever Sachs touched became either music or poetry. It was a fine fancy of Wagner's that made him give a musical rhythm even to the Cobbler's hammer. For to such a fresh and vigorous genius as that of Sachs, even the cobbling of shoes must have partaken of the spirit of his art. Longfellow, in his oft-quoted poem on "Nuremberg," touched on this inevitable mingling of work and song, saying:

"As the weaver plied his shuttles, wove he too the mystic rhyme,
And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's chime,

"Thanking God whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom."

And Longfellow paid his special tribute to our shoemaker, also:

". . . Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in huge folios sang and laughed.

* * * * * * *

"Vanished is the ancient splendour, and before my dreamy eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures like a faded tapestry.

"Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard,
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs, thy cobbler-bard."

Whittier, the genial and the gentle, recognised a kindred spirit in the great Maker of Shoes, as every one knows who is familiar with his poem in which appear the lines:

"Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,
In honest, hearty German . . ." etc.

From first to last Sachs worked for the universal good. Art was to him no personal gratification,—hardly a personal indulgence or means of expression. It was the method by which he, among a few chosen ones, was enabled to uplift the many in the service and to the glory of art.

Hans Sachs it was who gave to the Guild the rare coin bearing the face of King David, and thus founded that form of the mastersong known as the "*David-*

gesänge." The coin hung, with others, upon a heavy gold chain which was placed about the neck of winners in certain very exclusive and superior musical contests. And the favoured wearer was called the "David-winner."

It was a fine thing to be a David-winner. Men worked half a lifetime to attain the honour, though it would seem that the responsibilities of the David-winner exceeded his perquisities. A man thus distinguished was an acknowledged master and teacher, and was under moral and intellectual obligations to instruct others in his art. But it was a matter not only of honour, but of inflexible rule that he should accept no payment for the lessons which he gave.

The disinterestedness of the Mastersingers is clearly manifest in this. It was a matter both of duty and of privilege to aid others, but to accept remuneration would be to cheapen and degrade the song they loved to a commercial basis. And this would have been abhorrent to them. The lesson is one worth noting in this day of bartering, when few geniuses are above a little auctioneering, and every inspiration has its market value.

The David-winners were unwilling that their work should receive even such emolument as might cover the actual loss which their curtailed business might incur. We must remember that, although for the most part most prosaically prosperous, the Meistersinger were

almost all men to whom every division of time stood for some portion of labour accomplished, and a corresponding sum of money gained. Therefore, practically speaking, the David-winner, in giving his instruction *gratis*, gave, in addition, a fair amount of money out of his own pocket.

Thus did the Meistersinger of Nuremberg love that Art of Song of which they had appointed themselves the champions. And they did their work well. They sowed many fertile seeds, and cared for them duly, and from that planting the musical world of to-day reaps rich harvests.

Of course the possibilities in their own *Kunst* were neither perceived nor yet dreamed of by them. But the possibilities were there, albeit somewhat protoplasmic. They were waiting only for the easier, lighter and freer touch, to grow into musical creations of genuine and intrinsic value. In Heinrich von Mügeln's melody—known among the Masters as the Long Tone,—we find the germ of Wagner's "Meistersinger"! The broad and simple phrase which is one of the central themes of the great Overture and March can easily be recognised, in embryo, in the following:

It might be well just here to give a brief account of the way in which the Mastersingers' Contests were

conducted. Placards were first posted about Nuremberg, inviting citizens to come to St. Katherine's at a certain time. The gathering was always a large one, for the interest in the *Kunst* of the Masters was universal through city and suburbs. The proceedings began with the "*Freisingen*," or "Free Singing," which was open to any one who imagined that he had a lyrical or even merely a vocal gift. For a certain length of time the Masters and the citizens listened to these Free Singers, upon whose performances no judgment was pronounced. Then the contest began.

Four *Merker* (Markers) were stationed behind a screen or curtain near the altar. Each had a slate and piece of chalk, and each had a special responsibility, and a special duty to discharge. One Marker was supposed to take note of mistakes in rhetoric, another of errors in rhyme and metre, a third of incorrect forms of melodic construction, while the fourth,—provided with a large Bible,—paid careful heed as to whether or no the singer kept strictly to the sacred text.

Then the Singer who wished to become a Mastersinger, or the Mastersinger who wished to become a David-winner, began his song.

The decision of the Judges was entirely controlled by the records of the Markers, who made a chalk-mark for every fault detected. The Markers were zealous and the Judges conscientious, and he who

passed through the ordeal triumphantly—without being declared "outsung!"—must have been gifted not only with an excellent education, but a set of remarkably steady nerves.

Such were the ways and customs of the Meistersinger of Nuremberg.

Hans Sachs was born in Nuremberg on November 5th, 1494. Authorities differ as to his antecedents, some persons declaring his father to have been a shoemaker, others a tailor. In any case he was low-born, though probably of intensely respectable, even prosperous, parentage. As a child he went to the Latin School in Nuremberg, and made good use of his time. When he was fifteen he was apprenticed to a shoemaker (some histories say to his father), and worked as hard at cobbling as he had at Latin.

After two years of painstaking labour and conscientious application, he found himself a journeyman instead of an apprentice, with all the unwonted freedom of promotion. He straightway set out upon his "Wanderjahre (Wandering Year)." He was then seventeen, and keenly alert to new impressions. He wanted to see everything and do everything: the world as viewed from the sleepy streets of Nuremberg seemed too small for his Wanderjahre! No youth ever started forth upon his travels with a more vital interest in life and things than did Hans Sachs.

He wandered all over Germany, learning much, en-

joying everything, and living with every fibre and every cell of his healthy body and brain.

He went to Ratisbon and Passau, Lübeck and Osnabruck, Salzburg, Leipzig, and Munich. And wherever he went he made careful mental notes of his new impressions, and whenever he could he picked up stray bits of information, together with the usual vast quantities of experience.

He began to study singing as he went along. The towns which he visited all had their Guilds and Song Schools, and, through this varied mode of education, he acquired a wonderful versatility of style and breadth of musical experience.

In Munich, when he was nineteen, he finished his training in the "Charming Art," as it was called. And in 1514, when he was twenty, he began to write songs of his own. In 1515 (possibly 1516) he returned to Nuremberg,—barely twenty-one, but a finished master of music and poetry. And in Nuremberg he remained thereafter until his death.

They made him a Mastersinger, of course, and he worked untiringly for his Guild, as we have seen. When he was twenty-five he married. Details concerning the maiden's name and individuality are somewhat obscure, but we know that he was very happy with her, and had several children, and that when she died, after many years of mutual contentment, he mourned her loss sincerely. Nevertheless, his grief did not pre-

vent him from marrying again. Sachs seems to have been the ideal and typical German *Hausvater*, and like the great Bach, possessed the need and the genius for founding and fostering the Home. This second marriage was made when he was nearly seventy, but he was a man of eternal youth, and never outlived his spring-dreams nor his sense of humour. It was a year after this marriage that he wrote his delightful "*Fastnachtspiel* (Festival-Night-Song)" and, with his own delicious art, incorporated therein the famous old May Song of the thirteenth century.

Although this roundelay, or folk-song, was not his, he contrived to dress it in such a new and charming garb that it has become closely and justly associated with him.

The fresh and graceful qualities of the original verses are too delicate to be transplanted; the following is a very liberal translation:

"The May-time, the May-time!
It fills the world with flowers!
God seeth what I yearn for,
With all my quickening powers.

"For Love is all my longing,
A maid as fair as May;
To bring her to my hearthstone,
And make the Springtide stay.

"Of wooing sings the nightingale,
And joy that here begins:
Ah, must I be the only one
That woos,—but never wins?"

Sachs did not only write songs. He wrote dramas, narratives, fables, allegories, dialogues, hymns,—every form of literary and lyrical composition then in vogue, and many which he invented himself. He wrote two hundred and eight dramas in all, and one thousand five hundred and fifty-eight narratives. His most famous tragedies were "*Lucretia*" (1527), "*Virginia*" (1530), "*Melusine*," "*Klytemnestra*," and "*Julian der Abtrünnige* (Julian the Apostate)." His greatest comedy was "*Die Ungleichen Kinder Evä* (The Unlike Children of Eve)." There was, also, a wonderful Carnival play, and the famous "*Hürnen Segfried* (The Horned Siegfried)" (1557).

He had the inconsistency of all great souls. During the Reformation he was one of Luther's most violent partisans, and, in 1523, wrote for him the beautiful "*Wittenbergisch Nachtigall* (The Nightingale of Wittenberg)." The song was widely known and deeply admired, and proved a genuine help to Luther in gaining for him public sympathy.

After having identified himself thus definitely with the sweeping religious movement of the period, Sachs promptly proceeded to write four brilliant prose dialogues, "Counselling" (says the chronicle) "moderation in the religious life!"

According to his own statement, the Cobbler completed, between the years 1514 and 1567, six thousand and forty-eight works. This vast list was enormously

increased before his death, nine years later. He made use of all things in his compositions—folk-poems, legends, history, the Bible, every-day life.

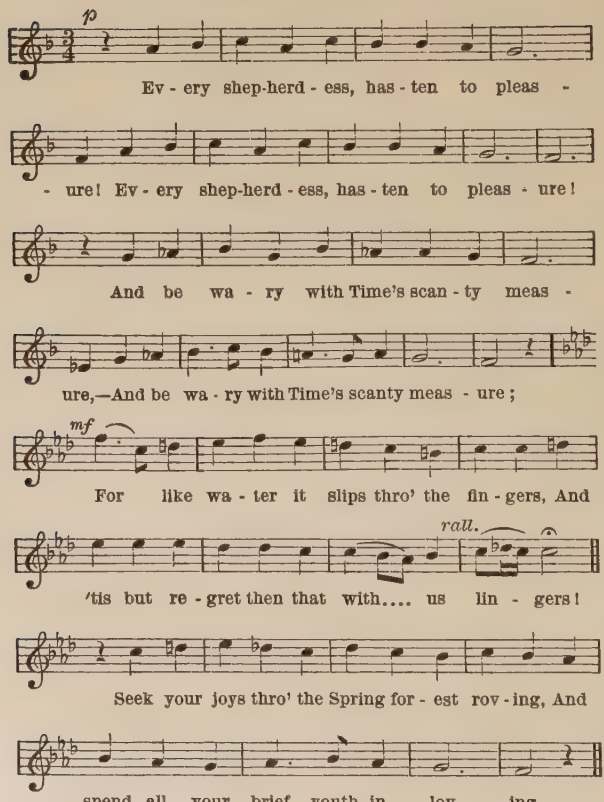
His was a utilitarian as well as an inspirational genius. No trivial memory nor passing fancy came to him but he found a value in it, and a power for usefulness. No trouble touched him but he learned from it; no joy but he shared it with the world. No petty annoyance came to interrupt his daily cobbling but he made of it a jest for us to laugh at to-day. No dream visited his sleep-sealed eyes but found its way into a song.

On January 19th, 1576, Hans Sachs, Mastersinger and Cobbler, the illustrious Maker of Songs and of Shoes, died, aged eighty-two. His life had been long and incredibly busy, and with the exception of four years when he was a very young man it had been spent in Nuremberg. How had he learned the Universal Speech, shut in among narrow streets and narrow minds, unyielding walls and unyielding customs? How did he find there the secret of undying youth? Perhaps the best answer is found on the lips of Wagner's Sachs:

"My friend," says the Cobbler, speaking out of his kindly tolerance and wisdom to the hot-blooded boy knight, "my friend . . . the real poems of the world are only dreams come true."

MAÎTRE GUÉDRON, A TEACHER OF KINGS

A ROMANCE BY
MAÎTRE GUÉDRON


p
Ev - ery shep-herd - ess, has - ten to pleas -
- ure! Ev - ery shep-herd - ess, has - ten to pleas - ure!
And be wa - ry with Time's scan - ty meas -
ure,—And be wa - ry with Time's scanty meas - ure;
mf
For like wa - ter it slips thro' the fin - gers, And
rall.
'tis but re - gret then that with.... us lin - gers!
Seek your joys thro' the Spring for - est rov - ing, And
spend all your brief youth in lov - ing.

IX

MAÎTRE GUÉDRON, A TEACHER OF KINGS

PARRY, in the "Oxford History of Music," says:

"The French composers, if left to themselves, do not seem likely to have effected much in the direction of passionate expression. Their natural instinct, like that of their public, seems in the direction of gaiety and light-heartedness, impelling them to treat even pathetic situations with a sort of childish superficiality, —as occasions for making something neat and pretty, rather than emotional and interesting. . . . The songs are dainty morsels in themselves, sometimes expressing very delicately the sentiments of undramatic words," etc.

While Germany was struggling slowly toward the goal of the finished Art-Song, and was floundering in the mazes of pedantry by the way, France was perfecting that exquisite and distinctive thing known through all centuries as French Song.

What the Troubadours, Trouvères and Ménétriers had sketched in lightest and most shadowy lines the sixteenth and seventeenth century Frenchmen filled in

with such rose-hued decoration, amplification and ornamentation as we might be tempted to term evanescent and ephemeral, had the whole not outlasted the centuries. In the early part of the sixteenth century, songs for three, four, and five voices were popular. But in the reign of Henri IV. the monodic, or single-voice, songs came into fashion once more.

With the tinkle of lutes and soft choruses of court singers, the French *chanson*, far from being forgotten, was endowed with new life, and, enshrined on a flower-decked altar, remained the pastime and the joy of kings.

Naturally there were very few exponents of this fragile art who had the keen brain, poetic instinct, light touch, and musical cultivation necessary to produce songs of popular charm and artistic finish.

Among these few were Böesset, Mauduit, Bataille, and,—greatest of all,—Pierre Guédron, the teacher of two kings, and the master of the seventeenth century *chanson* and *romance* in France.

He was born in Paris in 1565, and from the time that he was old enough to have any interests or any dreams, he devoted his life to the making of music. We know little of his private and personal existence beyond the fact that he married, and had one daughter and several sons,—none of whom appear to have particularly distinguished themselves. But of his work we have ample record,—not only in the chronicles and

anthologies and histories, but in his unmistakable and unique influence upon all subsequent French song.

At the time when he began to compose, Paris was given over to all manner of extravagant gaieties. The religious and political disturbances during the reign of the weak-minded Charles IX. had left in France a thirst for the perquisities of peace,—for the wildest and most extreme forms of merrymaking. Masques and Ballets formed the chief diversions of the Court,—diversions into which every soul poured his or her energies with a feverish and exaggerated excitement approaching Paganism. Indeed they had an old Bacchic hymn,—beginning "Deus, qui bonum vinum creati,"—which was sung at many festivals, and effectually proved the tendencies as well as the standpoint of the day. The following is a literal translation of this most extraordinary lyric that ever found favour in a civilised Christian Court.

"God! You who have created the good wine, and who have permitted that liquor to affect so many heads so ill, preserve for us, if you please, enough of sense, at least, to enable us to find our way to bed!"

The popular Ballet or Masque had been introduced into Paris by a protégé of Catharine de Medici, a young Italian violinist who had come to Court in 1577, had pleased her by his playing, and had been installed as her Intendant of Music. He called himself Balthazar de Beaujoyeuex, which had no re-

semblance to his real name, and was the composer of "Circé," the first Ballet ever produced in France. It was written and performed in honour of the marriage of the Duc de Joyeuse and Mlle. de Vaudemond, 1582, and was the beginning of a new musical craze.

Pierre Guédron grew up into an atmosphere of light dramatic music, and lost no time in identifying himself closely with the popular taste. Indeed, it was as a ballet-composer that his fame was first acquired, although he always loved song-writing best, and usually contrived to incorporate in his Masque music one or more of the charming *Romances* upon which he had spent his dearest dreams and eagerest industry.

Henri de Navarre, the Béarnnais beloved of Huguenots and women,—always excepting Madame Catherine, the Regent,—came duly to the Throne of France, and, as behooved him, wedded Marie de Medici. His Court Composer at that time was Claude Lejeune, who, dying in a timely hour the year after the royal marriage, left a most honourable position vacant. This position Henri called upon Pierre Guédron to fill. So, at the age of thirty-six he became Court Composer to the King of France. We gather from various records of the day that he was Valet de Chambre to Henri, and teacher of music to the whole royal family, and to many musical enthusiasts in the Court. The King had for him a genuine affection, and Guédron repaid the royal favours which he received by his

painstaking instruction of the King and the little Dauphin Louis in the gentle art of song-making.

Henri's love for music was a somewhat artificially cultivated product, the result of his first wife's ardent passion for sweet sounds. Marguerite de Valois preferred people to sing rather than to talk, if possible, and her influence did much toward making music fashionable in France. Henri himself started a precedent of impromptu or extemporaneous verse-making which resulted in a rhyming, declaiming, warbling, and more than two-thirds ridiculous Court. Henri himself, whether making love or making songs, was always debonnair, graceful and assured; but his would-be followers were not always successful in imitating his somewhat casual methods.

Of course he composed songs for the Princesse de Condé and many other great ladies, but his first impromtu stanza was made in honour of the pretty Duchesse de Sulli, with whom he was violently in love at the time,—the same Duchesse, by the bye, with whom Dumas has made us feel so intimate, in the pages of his "Reine Margot."

Henri was sitting at supper at the table of the Duchesse, and when he rose to drink to the hostess, won a round of laughter by declaring:

"I would drink to thee, Sulli,
But cannot, I confess!
For let me state to thee,
Adorable Duchesse,

To drink to thy sweet charms that so abound,
One should but do so, bowing to the ground!"

It was Henri who wrote the celebrated song "Charmante Gabrielle," and sent it to the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrée one day when he was planning a campaign against Spain, and a consequent absence from her:

"Ah, charming Gabrielle,
Thy darts most piercing are;
Alas,—those wounds to sell
For thrusts of public war!
What pangs to part from thee,
Mere glory so to gain!
Lifeless I well might be,
As free from love's dear pain!"

Paris taste at the time when Guédron became Royal Composer, was practically toward Vaudeville. People wished nothing serious, nothing sad; even a tragedy must be dressed up in some masquerade form which would amuse, instead of impressing them. We find several records of "Ballets tragiques" produced at this period!

These Ballets, let it here be explained, were not at all like our ballets of to-day. They were spectacular, dramatic performances, with dances and instrumental music of a high class. Sometimes they were pantomimic, but oftener were sprinkled with songs and choruses. The whole was a sort of musical potpourri,

a cross between Opéra Comique and Vaudeville. Adam de la Halle anticipated the Ballet, though in its sixteenth and seventeenth century form it was, thanks to Balthazar, mainly Italian.

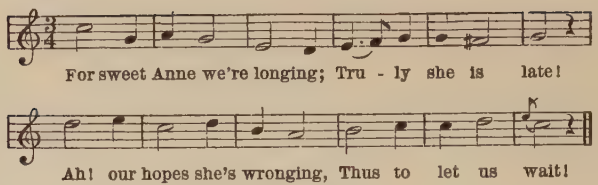
In 1610, Henri IV. having been killed by the Catholic fanatic Ravaillac, the boy Louis XIII., with his mother, Queen Marie, as Regent, reigned in France. Maître Guédron was retained as Court Composer, and continued to teach the art of music to the young King.

Louis XIII. showed a rare taste and ability in music from his childhood. He copied his master's style, of course, and his melodies are scarcely more than creditable sketches of the models which he had before him constantly. Nevertheless, his love for his art was genuine, and Maître Guédron was not only fond but proud of his royal pupil.

In 1614 the King was declared of age, and in 1615 he married Anne of Austria.

This wedding was an opportunity for Maître Guédron to pour forth such wealth of music as he could, and he made good use of it. He acquitted himself brilliantly, composing songs which surpassed any of his previous achievements. He wrapped them up in a Ballet of course to please the popular taste,—a Ballet which was called "Le Ballet de Madame," as a tribute to Anne.

One of the songs reproached the Queen and bride for her tardy appearance, and ran as follows:



Another song introduced in the same Ballet began with these particularly naïve verses:

"One day the Shepherdess Silvie
Sang: 'Oh, prithee love thou me!'
To her love and life sang she:
'Twas a shepherd gay!—
'Shepherd, wilt my true love be?
Then, awake! for it is day!'"

The "Ballet de Madame" was most successful, and pleased the young Queen immensely.

It has already been said here that, besides Guédron, there were other celebrated composers at that time, Jacques Mauduit, a gifted man, though no genius, and better known as a composer of church music than a maker of songs; Bataille, lutinist to Anne, and a wonderful dreamer with a pretty aptitude for delicate harmonies; and last but not least Böesset.

Antoine Böesset was of noble birth,—unlike Guédron, who had risen from the rank and file of the people,—and rejoiced in the title of Sieur de Villedieu. He was a rarely charming man and a brilliant musician, and by some persons was considered greater than Guédron. Although twenty years younger than the

famous Maître, he was one of the King's Councillors, Intendant to the Queen, a more celebrated lutinist even than Bataille, and Guédron's most formidable rival in the world of song. Nevertheless, the two masters contrived to help, instead of harming, each other, substituting collaboration for competition, and finally strengthening the tie of mutual admiration with that of relationship.

Maître Guédron's daughter Jeanne was all that was most charming and most desirable. She was that rare creature a girl of the people with an instinct for simple and homely pleasures and customs, polished by contact with the cleverest men and most fascinating women of the Court. She had youth, charm, cultivation, lack of self-consciousness, and the wit born of necessity in a life among the brilliant and unscrupulous French courtiers.

The Sieur de Villedieu fell in love with Jeanne Guédron, and she with him, and their marriage served to cement permanently the bond between the two distinguished musicians.

As Louis XIII. grew older he proved, as one writer has said, "more at home in music than in politics." Having appointed Richelieu as his Prime Minister, he turned his back, metaphorically, upon state affairs whenever he could, devoting his real enthusiasm to the framing of *Romances* as much like those of Maître Guédron as possible.

In Louis two musical souls seemed constantly at war. One manifested itself in his devotion to church music, and the other was betrayed in his unconquerable leaning toward such of the more frivolous branches of the art which his father had patronised. This latter taste eventually predominated over the marked if sporadic asceticism of the former, and in time he grew inordinately fond of the popular Ballet which he had first disdained.

On January 29th, 1617, a great Court Ballet, written by Guédron, Böesset, Bataille and Mauduit, was produced. It was entitled "La Déliverance de Renault," and was a most extravagantly spectacular affair. In it were employed sixty-four singers, twenty-four viol players, and fourteen lutinists. The effect was very fine, we are told, and the interest of the audience was vastly increased by the fact that the King himself had a part. In fact he impersonated the Fire-Devil—"Le Démon du Feu"—to the delight of the Court!

Indeed, it became quite fashionable for great personages to take part in the Masques and Ballets given at the Court. And courtiers with good voices, and pretty court ladies who knew how to dance, found in this form of amateur theatricals a charming opportunity for the exhibition of their peculiar gifts.

The King, in addition to histrionic tendencies, had other graceful, if unremarkable, accomplishments. One

was his gift of rhyming. Although not startlingly original, his poem "Amarylis" is quoted still as an example of seventeenth century verse-making:

"Thou thinkest, sun most bright,
That naught is radiant as thy glowing light,
When, in the springtide hours,
Thou fashionest the flowers;
But, lo! thou palest quite
Before the eyes of Amarylis!"

In addition to his many lovely songs, Maître Guédron composed the following Ballets: "La Serenade," 1614; an unnamed Ballet in the beginning of 1615; "Ballet de Madame" in the following March; "La Déliverance de Renault," 1617; "Ballet de la Reine," airs for "Ballet de Psyché," 1619; "Ballet des Dernières Victoires du Roi" and several others in 1620, and last, "Ballet de M. le Prince de Condé." We have no record of any further work, and though the exact date of Pierre Guédron's death is not known, we may assume that it was soon after the composition of the last-named Ballet. For with Maître Guédron to live was to compose.

Pierre Guédron's songs are so delicate, so sweet, and withal so masterly that one cannot help regretting the fact that he is not better known to-day. In regard to both words and music his lyrics are second to none in the history of French music.

We do not know whether or not Guédron wrote his own verses. If he did, he showed himself to have been

a charming poet as well as a great musician. Perhaps the loveliest of his *Romances* is that which begins: "*Au plaisirs, au délices, bergères!*":

"Every Shepherdess, hasten to pleasure,
And be wary with Time's scanty measure;
For like water it slips through the fingers,
And 'tis only regret then that lingers!
Seek your joys, through the spring forest roving,
And spend all your brief youth in loving!" . . .

The melody is of a sort to match the words: tender, graceful, spirited, daintily sad, but never lagging,—full of quick changes of key that only a master could dare.

Maître Guédron was a great song-writer;—one of the kings of the lyric craft. If few of us know and love him to-day as he deserves, it is because the spirit of his *Romances* is of the stuff that dreams are made on,—a trifle beyond our blunt twentieth century perceptions. As beautiful and perfect songs, they will always live in the appreciation of musicians and students, but for popularity—ah, well! their colouring is too faint and exquisite for the bright glare of modern times. They seem to require the subdued light and scented spaces of the gardens of Versailles.

But, by cajoling the laggard fancy, one may recover some tattered bit of the soft-hued tapestry of the past to serve as a setting and background for Maître Guédron's songs. One may dream that one hears the

light echo of lute and laughter and the murmur of satin skirts. One may breathe in imagination the heavy scents that came to Court from indolent Italy, see the fair women and careless gallants, and feel,—like a cobweb touch,—the soft, sweet, butterfly-life of it all; a butterfly-life that hovered always above marshes and graveyards, battlefields and bottomless pits.

"Be wary with Time's scanty measure,"

sang Maître Guédron,—delightful old Pagan!—

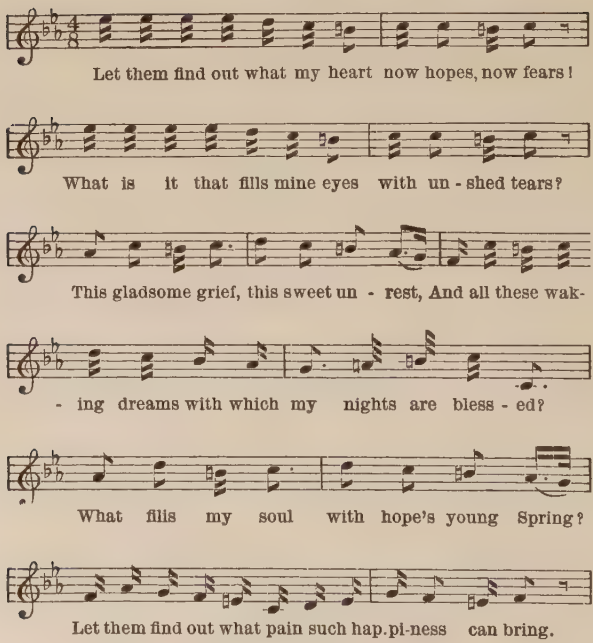
"For like water it slips through the fingers,
And 'tis only regret, then, that lingers!"

Ah, Maître Guédron, Maître Guédron! What a philosophy of life is this! Is it, indeed, you who offer us such counsel? Is it possible that thus you advise a struggling, bewildered, wistful world? You, "Master of the Royal Music, and Composer to His Majesty,"—you, a maker of master-songs, and a teacher of Kings!

THE WANDERING PEOPLE

A MAGYAR SONG

(By Erkel Elek)


Let them find out what my heart now hopes, now fears!
What is it that fills mine eyes with un - shed tears?
This gladsome grief, this sweet un - rest, And all these wak-
- ing dreams with which my nights are bless - ed?
What fills my soul with hope's young Spring?
Let them find out what pain such hap.pi-ness can bring.

X

THE WANDERING PEOPLE

IN the fourteenth century great bands of dark-skinned beings began to appear in Europe, and incidentally in Hungary. The old records say that there were "many of them, and that they were headed by Counts and Dukes in rich dress." The warm and mysterious East looked out of their deep black eyes, and in their lazy smiles and lithe movements likewise was their Oriental origin made manifest. A trifle like Turks they were, yet with a definite difference, for they were Scythians, of the Finno-Ugrian race,—so Mr. Krehbiel says; also, they hailed originally from Hindustan.

By gradual stages they came, with a truly Oriental lack of speed or violence. Slowly they infested the Southeastern part of Hungary, and there they stayed, among the Magyars. Quietly but unmistakably their influence began to steal into the Hungarian soul. Such is the way of the Orient and the Orientals.

By the fifteenth century they were an integral part of the people's life. Yet they waged no war (although sorely oppressed and persecuted), demanded

no lands, settled in no city,—no, nor yet village!—asked no favours, and mingled but little, at first, with the Magyar folk.

For these were the Gypsies,—the Wandering People.

Out of far-away tropical lands that have dreamed away centuries with far less struggle or concern than we have spent on a few short years, came the Wandering People of old. They had—

> ". . . yearned beyond the sky-line
> Where the strange roads go down."

In fact, it was and always will be their inevitable and eternal doom so to yearn toward those unseen roadways—roadways that lead—where? In all men and women possessed of that same fateful yearning is the blood of the Wandering People.

Spurred by the yearning,—that unrest which draws forth stars now and then from their places in high heaven, and impels them, whirling, down to the sea,—they came to wander through new lands.

And because the East is invariably sumptuous and spectacular when not utterly sordid and vile, they came "headed by Counts and Dukes in rich dress"! "Count" and "Duke" were mediæval Hungary's translations, doubtless, of mysterious Indian titles. Titles were dear to the Wandering People. They clung to every strange insignia of rank conceivable, and preserved ceremonies and formalities that had about them

still the aroma of spices, and unguents, and jungle-jasmine.

They sought out the wildest, loneliest spots for their stopping-places;—dwellings they had not, nor did they wish for them. In the depths of the forests and on remote hillsides they lived their lives,—smiling and dreaming, and keeping very close to the great primitive marvels of Mother Earth.

Elemental they were, yet strangely, mystically spiritual. Whatever they did, be the deed great or small, had Romance for a crown and Melancholy for a pedestal. Their lips were shaped to the praise of Beauty; their hearts were attuned to the philosophy of Sorrow.

At first, in spite of their intense hatred of disturbance and trouble, the Gypsies were the objects of a systematic persecution. They were accused of cannibalism and witchcraft, and were racked and burned and put to death in numberless ingenious ways.

When any man disappeared mysteriously the catch-word of the day was: "The Gypsies ate him!" And the suspected Gypsies would be captured and haled before a tribunal of ostensible justice. There, under tortures such as the mediæval magistrate seemed skilful in devising, the Gypsies would confess that "they *had* eaten him!" Thereupon they would be killed, more or less mercifully.

And if, next day, the missing man happened to be

found, and the recent demonstration was proved to have been murder and not execution, public opinion said: "Well, if we had not had them killed they would soon have eaten some one else, in any case!"

But in spite of these ghastly preliminaries, the Gypsies rapidly gained so firm a foothold in Hungary that persecution gave place to tolerance, and finally to complete acceptance.

They cleared themselves, in time, from the charge of cannibalism, but they have never succeeded in refuting that of witchcraft. As psychics and occultists they will be held as long as the East remains the Arch-Sybil of the world. And who can know that they did not bring with them from mystical Hindustan the eyes that See, and the ears that Hear?

To understand the "Musicians of Hungary," one must know something of the queerness and quaintness of their customs,—for in such things are the inherent impulses and sympathies of a race disclosed.

Who but the Gypsies would dream of renouncing some trifling material luxury, in honour of the dead? When a Gypsy husband and father dies, his widow and children take a solemn, formal and eternal oath never again to taste the article of food which he liked best!

When on long marches, there are always some members of the band who lag behind, or wander from the road in search of adventures by the way,—children who have paused to chase butterflies, or young men

who have slipped away to make pretty speeches to soft-eyed peasant girls. For these there are a dozen signals, which are left by the others. A little group of stones means one thing, two crossed sticks another, a pile of grass, leaves or straw a third,—and so on. The vagrant gypsies, hurrying after their comrades, find messages and directions for their guidance, telling them the route chosen by the band and any other necessary information,—in a language most easy for them to understand. For life in the clean open world sharpens the faculties, and when one's only primers and books have been roads and fields, one grows apt at reading letters that are penned in pebbles and grass-blades.

But the odd and delightful ways of the Gypsies are legion. They are a charming people, and one of their most wonderful traits is their unchangeableness! As they are to-day, so they were, we gather, six centuries ago. They have never lost the glamour that clung to those strange garments which they wore from Hindustan. In the fourteenth century they left epistles for their companions penned with sticks and straws and leaves upon the high road, and renounced the favourite delicacies of their beloved dead.

A strange but intensely sympathetic people they have been from the beginning, and well for Hungary that they came to her forests and mountains, and grew to be so vital a part of her spirit and heart. And

well, too, for Music that the music of the Magyars should have been thus perfected. For the Gypsies had a tribute to pay to the land that they had adopted; they did not only wander and dream and laugh together under the sun and the stars. They made songs, —the songs of the Gypsies,—the songs of the unwalled hill-spaces and echoless woods, the songs of the House of the Wandering People that has the sky for its roof.

Their songs, like wine, coursed through the veins of Southern Hungary. The cold, wild Slovaks in the northwestern part of the country chanted their Slavonic melodies in vain. Never did the music of the Slav pervade Hungary. The Gypsy music became the Magyar music, and the Magyar music became the music of Hungary. In Magyar-land the real Hungarian music was born, and lived, as it lives to-day,—a red-blooded, passionate, tragic, joyous thing, whose wings beat to an unheard rhythm, whose soul is mountain-mist, and whose heart is a coal of living fire.

Franz Liszt, the One Who Knew, declared that to the Gypsies, and the Gypsies alone, belonged the music of Hungary.

There were, to be sure, a number of religious outbursts in music just after Christianity had swept over Europe, and again during the Reformation. But the Hungarians belonged to their country before the Church, and ecclesiastical music was their strong point

at no time. They would not even sing their hymns in Latin, but always in the Magyar tongue! And beyond one really beautiful "Hymn to the Virgin," another equally fine "Hymn to St. Stephen,"—once King and always Patron-Saint of Hungary,—and one or two further exceptions, Church-Music had but a faint-hearted existence in the land of the Magyars.

The Folk-Song, brought to its full development by the Gypsies' Oriental infusion, had and has a supreme place in the heart of the nation as it has an assured niche in the history of the world's music.

And to this day it is the Gypsies who are the "Musicians of Hungary." From their fingers come the airs for those mad, thrilling dances so universally and poignantly associated with the spirit of the nation. And from their life, too, come the wonderful Magyar songs,—as sad as life and as mad as love, as strange as happiness and as eternally questioning as death. Mr. Krehbiel, in his "How to Listen to Music," points out that it is a common error to believe that all Magyar music is Gypsy music. He says: "The Gypsies have for centuries been the musical practitioners of Hungary, but they are not the composers of the music of the Magyars, though they have put a marked impress not only on the melodies, but also on popular taste. The Hungarian folk-songs are a perfect reflex of the national character of the Magyars, and some have been traced back centuries in their literature."

But if the Gypsies only coloured the Magyar music, what a colouring it is! Such colouring as a great master might paint upon the charcoal sketch of his pupil. If they did not actually compose the melodies which they played and sang so inimitably, they invested them with a character and personality all their own. Indeed, fair testimony of this lies in the universal acceptance of the Gypsy music as Magyar music,—even though it be, as Mr. Krehbiel says, erroneous.

Only of the East could be born such imagery and colouring,—the East wedded to that robust and vigorous strength which made the heroes of Hungary immortal.

The following stanza forms the text of a song by Erkel Elek, and from a poetical standpoint, shows the Oriental character of the national imagery:

[1]"Thine eyes are black as the deep night,
Yet they shine like the day so bright:
For as countless as the drops are in the sea,
So are the stars which from thine eyes flash down on me."

In the following verses the Eastern play of fancy is quite as apparent:

"From his boat into Balatin's waves
Tossed the Fisherman his net,
Fishing for the love which has fled,
Since she betrayed him, and left him alone with his grief.

[1]This and the following translations from the Hungarian by Madame Zerffi.

"Into Balatin's waves would I toss
Down my heart with its tears and its wail,
For love was its anchor, and hope was its sail:
It can never recover their loss."

And here is something which shows the Magyar song-maker in his gayest and most irresistible mood. It is rather a well-known song, called, in the original, "Piros, piros, piros, piros!"—and, whether we imagine it sung by a Gypsy or a Hungarian peasant, it has the national spirit of merriment,—condensed into two stanzas:

"Red, red, red the wine is
Which so brightly fills my glass;
Fair, fair, fair my sweet is,
My true, my shy, my own lass!
But full of whims is she:
When her eyes glow tenderly,
And I bid her 'kiss me, dear,'
She always says—'No!'

"You must, you must laugh not;
In Lent this is forbidden!
I must, I must love not,
My loving, tender, sweetest dove!
But ah! her looks so bright
Put all my resolves to flight;
When I bid her 'kiss me, dear,'
She always says—'No!'"

"Piros, piros, piros, piros," seems the very quintessence of joy in life. The lover who sings is a merry, carefree, wholesome creature, who likes red wine and laughter, and has but a slight reverence for the restric-

tions imposed upon him by the Church. In this is the very root and base of the Hungarian peasant's religion:

"You must, you must laugh not,
In Lent this is forbidden!"

Pure irony here:

"I must, I must love not,"

What Church could stop him?

"But ah! her looks so bright
Put all my resolves to flight!"

Such are the Lenten resolves, and indeed the religious convictions, of the average Magyar.

But of all the Hungarian songs which translations and English editions have made familiar to us almost the loveliest is the following wonderful little fragment of universal tenderness:

"Let them find out what my heart now hopes, now fears!
What is it that fills mine eyes with unshed tears?
This gladsome grief, this sweet unrest,—
And all these waking dreams with which my nights are blessed?
What fills my soul with life's young spring?
Let them find out what pain such happiness can bring."

The rhythm of Hungarian music is as strange and distinctive as that of Scandinavia. The curious management of word, note, accent and beat, all seemingly at odds with one another, becomes extraordinary

when one hears the impossible achieved, and grasps the fact that the Magyar's sense of *strict time* is one of the most emphatic in the world. How these metrical problems are solved into melodious and rhythmical compositions is a question which can only be answered by a Magyar Gypsy,—or Liszt. Mr. Krehbiel says that the rhythmical oddities in the Magyar music are direct products of the Magyar language. With the strange little terminal or cadence:

(sometimes minus the grace note) the Liszt "Raphsodies" have made the entire world of music-lovers familiar. Simple in itself, it is immensely characteristic, and an interesting bit of musical invention. Liszt, in the "Gypsy Epics," as he liked to call them, has also immortalised that odd accentuation of the *uneven beat* which is so peculiarly typical of the Gypsy music:

This last rhythmical detail is by no means exclusively the property of the Magyars, but their way of making use of it is entirely their own,—and it is too integral a part of nearly all of their melodies not to be pointed out.

There are very few celebrated song-writers in Hungarian history,—few musicians, indeed, of genuine renown before our beloved Liszt. Here and there a name stands out, in a vague and glimmering fashion, partly hidden by mists and shadows: Andreas Vásárheli, who wrote the "Hymn to the Virgin," already mentioned,—a composition which, for some reason, was first printed in Nuremberg in 1484; and the great bishop, Slatkonia, born in 1456, who was Chapelmaster to Maximilian I., and a skilled composer; and the famous "Sebastian the Lutinist," whose real name was Tinódi, a strolling musician and a most sweet singer, who died in the sixteenth century. But Hungary is essentially a land of folk-songs rather than of finished music.

Concerning the Hungarian's absorbing passion in his country and his art, Mrs. Wodehouse writes:

"The very exclusiveness with which he loves his own music has, by excluding foreign influence, been a hindrance to its progress, and has condemned it to a long stagnation in the immature stage of mere national music."

But she adds:

". . . It must, nevertheless, be admitted that the Hungarians can fairly plead the unsurpassed beauty of their national melodies as an excuse for their exclusive devotion."

And these national melodies, the beauty of which is

recognised by everyone, and the mystery and magic by the few who have an occult sympathy with things Oriental, came from the presence in Hungary of the Wandering People.

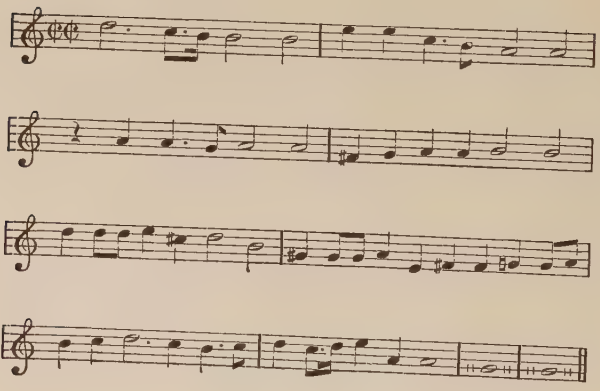
Liszt, the One Who Knew, called them: "Human birds, nesting where they would in the forests, or upon the bosoms of the great lonely mountains. . . ."

Human birds are they indeed, to whom has been granted the music-soul which is the prerogative of the feathered kind, and of the children of the gods. Companions to the things that fly,—and to the things that creep and scamper and vanish among the shadows;—companions to streams and stars, and trees and underbrush,—the Gypsies could hardly fail to have a wood-note in their songs, such as the birds themselves have,—or the water of the brook as it falls in an everlasting melody, from stone to stone.

This is one element of the music of the Wandering People. The other is the Something that looks from their deep eyes, and flashes in their smiles; that throbs in their passionate hearts and dreams in their metaphysical souls; the Something that is mysterious, and impenetrable, and that, through the maddest tempest of gaiety, remains immutably and infinitely sad. Men have called it the Shadow of the East.

THE CASKET OF GRAPES

AN AIR BY CACCINI



XI

THE CASKET OF GRAPES

A great casket, heaped high with bunches of grapes, was their device: "*Quid non designat ebrietas?* (Who intends not to get drunk?)" was their motto. For these, be it known, were the celebrated Florentine septet, "Degli Alterati,"—which means "The Thirsters."

They were all young, all brilliant, all noble, and all interested paramountly in one thing, the revolution of music. They rebelled violently against the pedantic harmonic form then in vogue among the better class of composers, and desired to bring Dramatic Song to its full development. A small but heroic band, they undertook the reformation of lyric art in 1568. They were not hampered by scruples born of timidity, nor by too much professional knowledge, and with immense assurance and good cheer they imbibed wine and art in pleasing conjunction at the house of that accomplished Thirster, Pietro Strozzi. The names of these seven enthusiasts,—the original band of Alterati,—to whom were added many illustrious names later, were, in addition to Strozzi: Giovanni Bardi Conte di Vernio, Jacopo Corsi, Ottavio Rinuccini, Girolamo Mei, Emilio del Cavaliere, and Vincenzo Galilei.

Pietro (sometimes called incorrectly Giambattista) Strozzi was a son of one of the oldest and noblest houses in Florence. Felipo Strozzi, a dissipated and utterly vicious man, had married Clarice, sister of the Lorenzo de' Medici who was made Duke of Urbino. It was Clarice di Strozzi by the bye who refused to recognise her half-brothers and desired them to be exiled from the country, because they were illegitimate. This alliance alone proves the standing of the Casa Strozzi. Pietro was a poet of genuine ability, and even a musician, though of no great attainments. It was he who wrote the music for "Il Mascarada degli Accecati (The Masquerade of the Blind)" in 1595.

Giovanni Bardi, the Count of Verino, was one of the most prominent nobles of the day. He was a brilliant and renowned mathematician as well as being a man of letters and a composer. His own music certainly never was inspired, but his artistic appreciation was keen and valuable. He belonged to the Academy "Della Crusca," a celebrated literary institution, and his standing in Florence was particularly high. He was a clever librettist, and among other works wrote the text for "Il Combattimento d' Apollino Cal Serpente," later set to music by Caccini.

Jacopo Corsi was another Florentine noble passionately devoted to the interests of art in general and music in particular. He, too, had a gift, though not a positive talent, for composition, and was a fairly

good musician of the dilettante order. Ottavio Rinuccini was a poet and a dramatist, with a dream of reviving the dramatic forms of the ancient Greeks. He closely approached being a genius, and was the poet chosen, in after years, to accompany Marie de' Medici, as dramatist and singer, when she went to France to marry Henri IV. A dim sort of rumour has been circulated,—the sort of rumour which often begins and ends in smoke,—that Rinuccini loved Queen Marie. But as he has been dead these very many years, no man will ever know how true or false it is.

Girolamo Mei was enthusiastically devoted to the cause of music, but had very slight musical talents himself. He was especially conspicuous and successful in his literary works on music, being the author of several brilliant treatises, and possessed of a gift which to-day we should term "journalistic."

Emilio del Cavaliere was one of the two genuinely talented composers among the seven original Alterati. He was born in Rome of a noble family, and had an inherent instinct for and knowledge of artistic things. While he was still absurdly young he was summoned to the Court of Tuscany by Duke Ferdinando de' Medici. The Duke appointed him Inspector-General of the Artists of Florence, and in that somewhat indefinite capacity he came to know Bardi, Strozzi, and the rest. A brilliant musician was Cavaliere, and one who understood the possibilities of the voice to a

marvellous degree. He was a typical "Alterate," inasmuch as he was of the nature that experiments. Not only was he among the first composers to employ such vocal ornamentation as the trill, shake, turn, etc. (*gruppo* and *grupetto* such tonal oscillation was termed in Italy), but he was also one of the pioneers in the use of the figured bass for instrumental music. Incidentally he was, of all the Alterati, the most intimate friend of their poetic Muse, Laura Guidiccioni.

Although only thirty-three at the time of the founding of the Alterati, Vincenzo Galilei was probably its oldest member. He is famous for a great number of interesting things,—among others for being the father of Galileo Galilei, the immortal astronomer, and for having invented solo-singing! He studied with Gioseffe Zarlino, the great master and contrapuntalist, but in spite of being a brilliant lutinist and viol-player, and a musician of robust inspiration, he was by no means a genius. There are, however, few men in musical history to whom we owe a larger debt of gratitude.

As a matter of fact, genius was not the presiding element in these early meetings under the symbol of the Casket of Grapes. They were all dilettanti, the founders of the Alterati. Subsequently they added to their gatherings several genuine planetary lights, but the original Seven were chiefly conspicuous for their enthusiasm. Yet they succeeded in revolutionising

lyric and dramatic music, and out of those friendly and convivial meetings of theirs grew a new era for song,—not only in Italy but all over the world.

Florence has always been an artistic centre. She has never been particularly conspicuous for her morals, but she could invariably be counted on for her manners. The Medici did not make for high ethical standards, but they were patrons of the arts. During her worst epochs "Firenze" was beautiful, and it is certain that even her Carnival bull-baiting must have been carried on with a graceful sort of barbarity.

The "Canti Carnascialeschi (Carnival Songs)" of Florence should be better known. Beginning as mere street-ballads, they grew, under that thorough-paced but artistic scoundrel Lorenzo de' Medici, into plays and operettas.

He whom Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" calls "Master Cosimo of the Medici" was the ruling power in Florence in 1568. He was an interesting person, with a fondness for murdering his children, but a profound appreciation of art.

In every way possible the aim of the city was toward beauty. Vice might exist if it liked, it might even be encouraged and welcomed with songs and timbrels, but it must be charming vice, artistic vice, with a definite æsthetic mission to fulfil,—a duty toward the Florentine gods who were all Pagan and all beautiful.

Savonarola preached superbly the message of

"vanitas vanitatum,"—waging a crusade of sublime eloquence against the frivolities and laxities of the day. But even his tirades were in keeping with the standards of Florence, for they were always perfect of their kind, finished expositions of the highest spiritual inspiration.

And the vanity of things went on, like a chime of exquisite bells, empty but indescribably tuneful; bells that have rung since Florence was born, and will echo softly on until she has crumbled not only into ruins, but into dust.

It was Beauty which the Alterati desired; also, it was Truth. They were tired of the forms that meant nothing, and the rules that excluded even the possibility of freedom. They wanted music which would fire the soul and touch the heart, and for the scientific or theoretic accuracy of their work they cared but a trifle. Not that they were all amateurs,—as we have seen, for instance, from the achievements of Cavaliere, —but they recognised with perhaps exaggerated clearness the lack of elasticity and of spontaneity in the inflexible counterpoint in vogue, and desired to bring about a musical condition in keeping with the Florentine passion for the beautiful. They dreamed of a lyric art which should combine the freshness and charm of the folk-songs and carnival airs with the erudition of the musical student. This, with the aid of three additional Alterati,—Caccini, Peri and Marenzio,—

they eventually achieved. To these ten men, and a handful of sympathetic "Florentine patricians," belong the honour of inaugurating Monodic (or solo) song in the appreciation of the public, and of presenting to the world the embryo of the Italian Art Song.

At that time, Italian music was practically entirely polyphonic music. The monodic form did not exist except in street-songs. Madrigals there were, written for four, five or more voices, but no lyrics. Moreover, the secular compositions were treated by the masters of the day precisely as though they were masses,—rigid adherence to the laws of counterpoint and a careful exclusion of spontaneity or levity being their two characteristics. It was this incongruous mixture of secular text and ecclesiastical music which the Alterati were determined to change.

When Francesco I., Duke of Tuscany, married the lovely Bianca Capello, that famous Venetian beauty, with the eventful and sad career, Florence was in a positive uproar of festivity. The bridal music was to be the best which Italy had ever heard, and was to be composed by the great Andrea Gabrieli and Claudio Merulo. These two Venetian masters are renowned in history for their strict musical rhetoric. They wrote in the style of Palestrina, and created models in correct form and contrapuntal ingenuity for posterity.

Had the occasion been a funeral or even a Lenten mass, their music would have been superb; but as

bridal-songs and not hymns were required, they merely succeeded in making their own great art ridiculous. The words of the madrigals were of the least churchly nature imaginable,—chiefly consisting of an uninterrupted enumeration and laudation of Bianca's perfections; and the music was such as might have accompanied an "Ave Maria, ora pro nobis"!

All Florence smiled at the effect. But the Alterati did not smile. They were too overwhelmed with disgust. They had come to hear wedding-music by two of the greatest masters of their time, and they had heard a performance mainly remarkable for its absurdity. They could not contain what they felt, being young and impetuous, and straightway determined to make a public denunciation of the universally accepted style of "secular music."

By this time the Alterati were meeting in the Palazzo Bardi,—for Pietro Strozzi, that brilliant amateur so well beloved by his friends, was dead. Bardi was the acknowledged patron of Florentine art, and the growing circle of talented men of which the Casket of Grapes was the device, is known in musical history as the Bardi coteri.

Mei and Galilei began the campaign against the recognised standards of music in the well-known and brilliant series of letters called the "Dialogo della Musica." Fast and furious waged the "Paper War," as it was termed. Zarlino, Galilei's old master, be-

longed to the strict polyphonic school, and was drawn into the vortex. He found several severe things to say to his quondam pupil and present adversary, some of which (notably his statements in regard to the pitching and tuning of musical instruments, and to scales in general) were absolutely justified, and put Galilei ignominiously in the wrong.

Art-lovers were divided, generally speaking, in two factions: the professionals, who for the most part abided by the old rules until the way had been cleared for their defection,—and the dilettanti, of whom Naumann says: "They were not awed by any hideous thought of casting to the winds the experiences and prejudices of the professor. If any dread of violating hard-and-fast theory had had any weight with them their efforts would have been paralysed. . . . And here we must pay a just tribute to the dilettanti."

Vincenzo Galilei was one of those men who are born to take the initiative. He was not a genius, but he was a pioneer; and he possessed that species of daring self-confidence which makes a brilliant substitute for higher talents. He, Mei, and the Alterati in general found an able coöperator in Giambattista Doni, a member of Della Crusca and a celebrated musical theorist. The three of them, sometimes assisted by Rinuccini, attacked the established music of the world until the heavens rang with the vigour of their denunciations.

And then, one day, Galilei proceeded to invent Monodic Song.

He composed a cantata called "Il Conte Ugolino,"—founded on the Ugolino episode in "Il Purgatorio,"—and, accompanying himself on his viol, sang it all through himself, to his assembled friends.

Even the Thirsters were amazed. Never had the Casket of Grapes presided over so surprising a performance. Was he by chance the victim of too excessive a thirst, both for wine and for art?

Some of his hearers laughed, some were frankly bewildered, but they all applauded heartily, and Doni declares that it was "very pleasing." And when Galilei made a song out of the "Lamentations of Jeremiah," and sang *that*, the thing was done: Song,—single-voice, Monodic, solo Song,—was born.

Galilei could not bring his invention to completion, for he lacked both musical inspiration and profound cultivation,—but he had created the idea, and now left it to other and greater brains to develop. Cavaliere quickly surpassed him along his own lines, and then came the three new Alterati before whom not only the dilettanti of the Casket of Grapes but all Italians were compelled to bow: Giulio Caccini, Luca Marenzio and Giocomo Peri.

In 1558, Giulio Caccini was born in Rome, and for that reason is sometimes spoken of as Giulio Romano. He learned to sing and to play the lute

from Scipio della Palla, the master who did so much to develop the *grupetto*. When Caccini was twenty he went to Florence, where he was received enthusiastically by the Thirsters, and he was one of the first to follow Galilei's lead in writing composition for the single voice. His success in the new form of music was instant and extraordinary. "You are the father of a new kind of music," wrote to him Angelo Grillo, Tasso's friend,—"or rather singing,—which is not a song, but a recitative song of a nobler and higher order than the popular song; which does not sever nor maim the words, nor deprive them of life, but gives new force and vigour to both. . . ."

Mrs. Wodehouse says that Giulio Caccini created "an epoch in musical history" when he published his "Madrigali, Canzoni, and Arie,"—*for one voice.* Indeed the world has almost forgotten that it was not Caccini who was "the father of the new kind of song." This is but one of a thousand cases in musical history in which one man supplies the thought and another the act.

Caccini was a genuine and forceful musician, though his counterpoint, owing to carelessness in study, was often not very sound. His songs are full of the vigour and freshness of a really fine imagination, and show a fund of versatile invention. He was a man whose personality entered strongly into his work. He filled his airs with such directions as: "Esclamazione spiritosa

(spiritedly exclamatory),"—"Senza mesura, quasi favellando, in armonia con la suddetta sprezzatura (Without keeping the time, and as if speaking in accordance with the already expressed disdain),"—etc., besides constant minor marks of expression. He also gave explicit directions in his preface as to the singing of every song. Having a particularly beautiful voice, he much preferred, if possible, to sing his airs himself, and did so very often, accompanying himself upon the theorbo, in the playing of which he had been perfectly trained by Scipione della Palla.

This instrument, by the bye, requires a word of mention. It has a variety of names,—tiorba, tuorba, and archiliuto, and, technically speaking, is a large, double-necked lute with two sets of tuning pegs. It was dearly loved by sixteenth century musicians, and is supposed to have a peculiarly sweet and plaintive tone. What it *looks* like is a goose with a crick in its neck.

Who Caccini married we do not know, but his daughter Francesca was a famous singer and an able composer as well. He educated her himself for a musical career, and it was his boast that she was "a finished cantatrice at nineteen!"

When Caccini set Bardi's "Apollino" to music in 1589, he was assisted by the eminent madrigalist, Luca Marenzio, who by this time had become one of the Alterati. The story of this brilliant man is a sad one in spite of being full of the records of public triumphs.

He was born in 1560, in the little village of Coccaglia, which lies between Brescia and Bergamo. The natives of these two large towns have waged a pretty word-war over his memory,—each side claiming him to belong rightfully to its own township. Out of the confusion of conflicting data brought up by the opposing contingents a fairly complete history has been rescued,—though accuracy in regard to the sixteenth century Italian composers is a synonym for impossibility.

His family is reported to have been of old Bergamese stock, but extremely poor, so poor that Luca was practically supported and educated by Fra Andrea Masetto, the village priest of Coccaglia.

The boy studied under Giovanni Contini, the organist of the Cathedral in Brescia, and while very young began to compose.

Ottavio Rossi, in his description of Marenzio's childhood and early surroundings, expresses the belief that these youthful associations did much to form the taste for the pastoral, simple and sweet, which characterised the compositions of his later years.

Whoever heard Marenzio play his melodies adored him, invariably, and, after having been aided and honoured by many influential nobles of his own land, the young madrigalist was appointed Master of the Royal Music at the Court of Poland. The Polish Queen, consort of Sigismund III., was one of the most enthu-

siastic admirers of Marenzio's music, and a genuine friendship seems to have existed between the two.

But Poland is not Italy, and Marenzio was a fragile being, composed chiefly of nerves and imagination. The Court Physicians warned him that he would die unless he left the chill winds of the North. So he left the gracious King and Queen and journeyed home to Italy, there to be honoured, and fêted, and copied, and bored, and made much of, to a wonderful degree. It was at this time that the Alterati opened their doors and their wine-casks to him, and that he wrote the madrigals for the "Apollino" of Caccini and Bardi.

One of Marenzio's closest friends was the great Cardinal Cintio Aldobrandino, the nephew of Pope Clement VIII. His Eminence vied with the public in honouring the young musician, who obtained a position as musician in the Papal Chapel.

Just who the mysterious lady was whom Marenzio loved we do not know. Henry Peacham, in "The Compleat Gentleman," says that she was the Holy Father's kinswoman, and incidentally "one of the rarest women in Europe for her voice and the lute." But we have no very definite information upon which to base conjecture. There is a story that the Queen of Poland, having heard of the lady's musical fame, sent word to Marenzio asking him to bring her to the Polish Court. There are also other tales of a like

nature concerning her, but one and all are vague and problematical. Marenzio retained his appointment in the Papal Chapel until his death, and the Pope was unfailingly gracious to him save in one respect: he would not give his consent to his kinswoman's marriage with the young musician. This sorrow is said to have broken Marenzio's heart and spirit, and soon afterward he died.

John Dowland, the English lutinist who met him once or twice, declares frankly that he "could not dissemble the great content he had found in the proffered amity of the most famous Luca Marenzio." And indeed he was almost universally loved and admired. Henry Peacham gives this description hearing him play his compositions:

"For delicious aires and sweete Invention in Madrigals, *Luca Marenzio* excelleth all other whatsoever: and to say truth hath not an ill Song. . . . His first, second and third parts of *Thyrsis, Veggo dolce mio ben che foe hoggi mio Sole Cantava,* or *Sweete Singing Amaryllis,* are Songs the Muses themselves might not have been ashamed to have had composed. . . ."

Peacham also gives us this picture of the great madrigal-writer: "Of stature and complexion, he was a little and blacke man."

Peacham declares that the Pope's displeasure over Marenzio's love for the mysterious kinswoman so

wrought upon the musician's feelings that "hee tooke a conceipt and died."

And so we come to the greatest genius who ever joined the Alterati, Giocomo Peri.

He was a Florentine, and though for some reason he does not appear to have been one of the original band of Thirsters, he grew to be closely associated with the Casket of Grapes and its votaries. The exact date of this celebrated composer's birth is not known, but as it was during the last part of the sixteenth century he must have been a very young man still when he joined the Alterati.

His comrades were devoted to him. They called him "Il Zazzerino (the Short-Haired One)" by way of an affectionate jest, for, as a matter of fact, he had an enormous amount of hair, of a vivid yellow, which shone like a nimbus about his face.

He had studied music under Cristoforo Malnezzi, of Lucca, but, like Caccini, had never taken the pains to complete his artistic education with any degree of thoroughness. His music was of an order, however, which did not require cultivation. It sprang, inspirationally, from the inexhaustible source of pure genius.

For a time he was Maestro di Capella to Duke Fernando, and later to the great Cosimo. He married a daughter of the Casa Fortuni, and became a social, as well as an artistic, power.

His son was a constant trial and anxiety to Peri. He was sent in after years to Galileo Galilei, our Galilei's illustrious son, to be educated, and succeeded in causing his master the greatest possible trouble. So violent and so vicious was this youth that Galileo invariably called him, despairingly, "My Dæmon Peri!"

Giocomo Peri is often called the "Father of Opera." It is certain that when he set Rinuccini's "Dafne" to music, he wrote the heading to a new chapter in musical history. He and Rinuccini collaborated once more upon the famous "Eurydice," which was performed at the wedding festivities of Marie de Medici and Henri IV., and had so vast an influence upon French music. It is said that Caccini, too, had a hand in the composition of this celebrated opera, which, strange as it seems, was the precursor of the modern music drama!

Operatic work was now the object of all the enthusiasm of the Alterati. Emilio del Cavaliere, while he distinguished himself by no immortal works in this line, wrote exquisite music for pastoral plays. These were written for him by Laura Guidiccioni, and between them they evolved some delightful work.

The Alterati had two guiding stars, we understand; —one a serious-minded planet, the other something of a comet. The first was La Guidiccioni, who came of a family in Lucca famed for its literary achievements.

She wrote excellent poetry, we are told, and did much to promote art and letters in Tuscany.

And then—there was Euterpe!—Euterpe, the brilliant, the wonderful, the gifted, and the adored! Was she not acknowledged by even the dullest Florentine to be a great artist? And was not Il Zazzerino transported by joy when he showed her the score of "Eurydice," and she approved of the work?

Her name was Vittoria Archilei, and she was a Florentine singer. But to the Alterati she was always Euterpe: Euterpe, the Muse, the "Well-Pleasing One," the patroness of flute-players and revellers, the follower of Apollo and of Bacchus, she who is ever pictured crowned with flowers, and holding a flute or lyre.

"Euterpe" was a fitting goddess for the Thirsters, and Peri was not the only one who hung upon her censure or praise.

As seen across the gulf of over three hundred years, they seem a wonderfully lovable band,—these young Florentines of the Casket of Grapes. If they were a bit iconoclastic in their theories and impetuous in their practices, at least they possessed that fire which kindles nations, devours prejudice, warms art, and lights the path of progress: the fire of Euthusiasm.

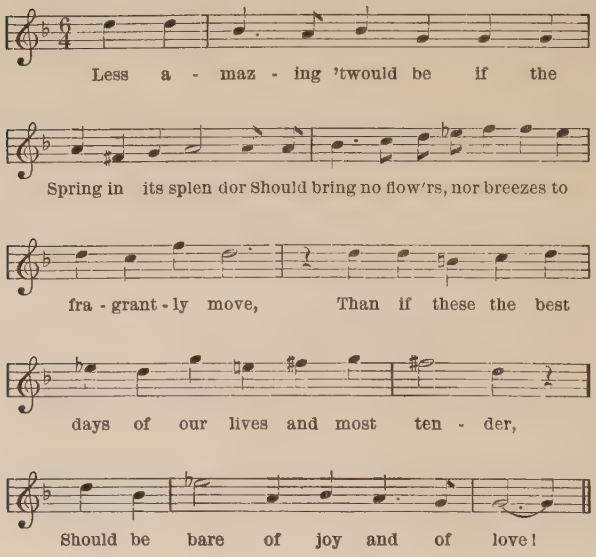
The Alterati existed for many years. When Bardi was called to Rome by Pope Clement VIII. to become his *Maestro di Camero*, the Thirsters met at the Palazzo Corsi. There we lose sight of them and do

not know the processes by which, as the years went by, the band was slowly dissolved. After all, their work had been done. The New Music was no longer a dream in the brains of a few madcap dilettanti, but a definite and acknowledged element in universal art. Consider well what it was that they did,—those men back there among the glimmering lights and blurring shadows of the past. They established Monodic Song; they instituted harmony between music and words; they galvanised the old Church forms into spiritual life; and they founded the Opera.

Salve, oh, Casket of Grapes! You are the symbol of the abundant wine of inspiration and enthusiasm which the Alterati of Florence poured into the music of the world.

THE SCULLION OF LA GRANDE MADEMOISELLE

SONG OF THE SHEPHERDESS IN "ARMIDE"


Less a - maz - ing 'twould be if the
Spring in its splen dor Should bring no flow'rs, nor breezes to
fra - grant - ly move, Than if these the best
days of our lives and most ten - der,
Should be bare of joy and of love!

XII

THE SCULLION OF LA GRANDE MADEMOISELLE

IF the Chevalier de Guise had not made a half-jesting promise to Mademoiselle, when calling upon her at the Orléans Palace just before his departure for Italy, the history of music would be different.

Neither he, very debonnair and gallant, nor she, very young and wayward and spoiled, had the slightest intention of thus affecting the development of art. Mademoiselle was bored by herself and the world. At the moment few opportunities for spectacular escapades seemed open to her.

She heard M. le Chevalier's remarks on the subject of his prospective trip through Italy with the restlessness of a child. Doubtless the thought of such desultory and untrammelled journeying appealed to the vagabond in her nature, and made her hate her beloved Paris for the moment.

When, in taking leave of her, he asked, between a smile and an obeisance, if he might bring her something from Italy, she answered, with a sudden idle impulse:

"Oui: Je veux un joli petit Italien! (Yes; I should like a pretty little Italian boy!)"

The Chevalier laughed, bowed low once more, and assured her that he would not forget her commands.

Then he went his way; and Mademoiselle forgot all about it straightway. But the pebble had been thrown into the pool, and a new chapter in music had been begun.

Twelve years before, in 1633, Giovanni Battista de' Lulli had been born. His father, Lorenzo de' Lulli, was the son of an old and honourable Florentine family, the fortunes of which had fallen to a low ebb. Of his mother we have little information beyond her name, which seems to indicate noble birth, Caterina del Serta. They lived just outside Florence, and it was there that Giovanni's earliest, though only his earliest, childhood was passed. Doubtless his parents dreamed that he would grow up to be a Florentine gentleman like Messer Lorenzo. But it was written that, twelve years later, he should abandon his Italian birthplace and his Italian name, and attach himself to the fortunes of a new land.

Giovanni Battista apparently was possessed of some demon of unrighteousness. From the beginning of his childhood he established records for mischief and impishness which were remarkable even for a Latin child. He was irresistibly quaint and charming, and attracted all who saw him, but he was a source of perpetual anx-

iety to the Lulli pair, who had lurid visions of a career of crime stretching before their son.

There seemed to be only one thing which Giovanni Battista loved better than mischief, naughtiness and disobedience: that was music. His ear was exceptionally fine and keen, and even as a tiny boy he had the artist's sense. He would become docile and good at once, the moment that some vagrant ballad-singer passed by, singing his soft old Italian songs. And as he himself had a sweet and flexible voice he was forever humming over the airs that he heard. There was a door into his queer perverse heart, and, though it stood fast closed and locked as a rule, its key from his birth to his death was music.

One day a certain old Franciscan monk noticed the child, and was charmed by his merry face and eager eyes, his grace and his delightful voice. He talked with Giovanni Battista several times, and discovered the boy's passion for music. Like most monks of the old days, the old man knew the essential foundations of music, and he determined that this brilliant, if self-willed child should have the benefit of such knowledge as was his.

He began to teach Giovanni Battista the a b c of music, and taught him to play not only the violin but also that extremely secular instrument, the guitar. Giovanni Battista learned everything with the rapidity of a shooting star. He soon acquired all the rudimen-

tary musical education which his master was able to give, and thirsted for more. He learned to play the guitar and violin with the skill of a prodigy, and to sing like a veritable bird.

The picture, as we view it in fancy, is a quaint one: the old Franciscan in habit and cowl, with rosary and girdle and crucifix, and the enthusiastic, bright-eyed child; both bending over the monk's old guitar as he teaches Giovanni how to play an accompaniment for a love-song which they have heard recently in the Florentine streets.

The guitar,—forever associated with scenes of merry-making or with moonlit serenades,—how did he happen to know it so well, that old Franciscan monk? From this early chapter in our young composer's life comes a breath of secret and fugitive romance that tempts one to speculation. Certainly he was a delightful and a baffling being, this aged Brother who knew so marvellously well how to play the guitar!

When Giovanni Battista was not quite thirteen came the beginning of his really remarkable career.

He was basking in the warmth of the Italian sun one day and singing to himself. Perhaps he was even then in some dream-world, brilliant and beautiful, where he was to make songs and sing them, forever and ever. His voice, fresh and boyish, but excellently trained, thanks to the diligence of the monk, was remarkable enough to attract the attention of a passer-by. So it

came about that into the vague gorgeousness of Giovanni Battista's day-dream stepped suddenly a personage who seemed a part of it. Giovanni Battista thought confusedly that he looked like a courtier or a king or some such exalted creature: he had servants and fine clothes, and a general atmosphere of grandeur, and he had positively stopped to speak to him,—him, Giovanni Battista, curled up in the sun like a little yellow-brown, purring kitten!

The Chevalier de Guise had not forgotten that casual promise to Mademoiselle in Paris, and was still looking for her "petit Italien." Giovanni Battista's expressive face attracted him at once, and his voice,—it was a delight! Here surely was the very child for Mademoiselle. He had grace, and a personality, and he could sing; he would make an ideal page.

A few questions elicited the information that the boy could also play upon the violin and guitar, and likewise showed him to have a gay wit and very pretty manners. Enchanted with the little fellow, the Chevalier wasted no more time on preliminaries but asked him, suddenly, if he would go back with him to France, to be the page of a beautiful Princess.

Giovanni Battista wasted as little time as the Chevalier, and, with a glow of excitement and delight in his handsome eyes, cried "yes!"

Messer de' Lulli and Madonna Caterina were visited by the Frenchman at once. He convinced them of the

great honour it would be for their son to be taken into the service of the Duchesse de Montpensier, and painted the prospective position in glowing colours. It did indeed seem a most wonderful opportunity, and they bade farewell to Giovanni Battista. They wept in doing so, in spite of the trouble which he had given them ever since he was old enough to play pranks, but Giovanni Battista, whose heart was flint, ice and steel combined, except toward his music, knew no shadow of regret in leaving his parents and Italy. His brain was full of sparkling pictures of Paris, of the great lady he was to serve, and the many wonderful and interesting things which he was to see and do. Almost immediately he departed for France with Guise, and sang for joy as he went. It is doubtful if he even remembered to say good-bye to the old Franciscan monk, —who, left behind, was obliged perforce to play upon his battered guitar alone.

When they reached Paris the boy was no longer called Giovanni Battista de' Lulli, but Jean Baptiste Lully; and so ended the first chapter of his life.

The second began with his presentation to Mademoiselle.

She happened to be in a furiously bad temper when the Chevalier de Guise arrived, smiling and nonchalant, accompanied by Baptiste,—as he was now called.

Guise reminded her of her command and his prom-

ise, and, with mock solemnity, presented her with his offering: the little Italian boy she had asked for.

Mademoiselle looked at them both. She was very young then,—barely nineteen, and only six years older than Baptiste. He gazed at her with a child's open-eyed admiration and wonder, thinking her the most brilliant being he had ever imagined,—and the most marvellously dressed.

"Ah, bah!" said Mademoiselle, with a flash and a frown, "I said a *pretty* Italian boy! Take him away."

The Chevalier retired, crestfallen, with Baptiste, only to be recalled by Mademoiselle, who ordered that the boy be sent to the palace kitchen. He was not pretty enough for a page, she declared, but would do very well as a *marmiton* (scullion)!

A servant led him away from the presence of his august young mistress, and instructed him in his duties as *marmiton* under Mademoiselle's cooks. Baptiste was very silent and seemingly quite impassive. But in his small heart, torn with disappointment, bruised by humiliation, and burning with rage, began that hour a profound and bitter hatred of Mademoiselle, which never departed nor lessened during all the days of his life. Yet, as a matter of fact, his mistress was unworthy of his violent detestation, and had many generous and fine qualities, in spite of her quick temper, despotic tendency, and countless perversities.

Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Mont-

pensier, known to France and history as La Grande Mademoiselle, was a strange being. She was a daughter of Gaston d'Orléans and the Duchesse de Montpensier, a granddaughter of Henri IV. and Marie de' Medici, and a cousin of Louis XIV. She was a creature of violent moods and a giant self-will, and was by nature an adventuress and a great lady in one.

Mademoiselle it was who took part in the Fronde, headed troops, scaled the walls of Orléans on a ladder, and saved Condé's defeated men, after the Saint-Antoine battle, by opening the gates of Paris, and covering the route of their flight with the cannons of the Bastille!

She was so great, so stupendously rich, and so very close to royalty that, to all intents and purposes, she was a queen in her own right. Since no one dared to gainsay her will, she rode supreme above every convention of her time, and presented history with that amazing paradox, a Princess who did what she chose. She contrived to create a large amount of trouble during her career, as was the inevitable outcome of an exalted position and an ungovernable nature.

"The beginning of the misfortunes of my house," she declares in her remarkable "Mémoires,"—"followed closely upon my birth!"

This madcap girl-duchess, then, whom high and low called by the simple title of Mademoiselle, was the

mistress of the Orléans palace where Battiste Lully was scullion.

A marmiton's position was one with small honour accruing to it. If to be a scullion in Mademoiselle's kitchen was not quite so contemptible as to be one in less exalted households, it nevertheless was a condition quite without dignity, however one might look at it. A scullion was called a "*galopin*," which may be translated as "errand boy," or "scamp," but, as it generally was used as a term of opprobrium, was apt to mean the latter.

Radet calls Lully "one of the most extraordinary types of the successful adventurer that ever lived." Perhaps one of the elements of his success lay in his ability to adapt himself to his adventures, as well as his unerring perception of opportunities. Lully never willingly wasted one moment in a manner which was not moderately certain to bring him in some sort of dividend. His pride, while quickly injured and secretly implacable, never stood in the way of his advantages. Therefore it was characteristic that he should accept the position of *galopin* with inner rage but apparent cheerfulness. Sometimes patient fortitude and expedient hypocrisy look very much alike on the outside.

Battiste was a born actor, and when he had grasped his own situation, he spent no strength in rebellion, but began to play his rôle in all consistency.

He was an admirable *galopin* truly, and his fellow servants found him most merry and companionable. He became an immense favourite and kept the entire kitchen amused by his fun, and by his singing of his sweet Florentine songs. He also learned the street-ballads of Paris, and sang them very effectively and with the French spirit, which it had been an easy matter for him to acquire.

Time passed, and still he remained a scullion, and still he waited for some opportunity to arise. He had the optimism and the courage of the true adventurer, even at that early age, and felt firmly confident that his luck would change some day. And change it did, in such a fashion and to such an extent that, in looking back over musical history, we can find no parallel example of similarly brilliant success and good fortune.

In some way Baptiste obtained a violin. It was an unusually bad one, of cheap make and wretched tone, but it was a violin, and therefore Baptiste loved it. He played upon it in every spare moment, and, through much practice, improved steadily in his execution.

In a corner of the great kitchen, the air filled with the clatter of pots, the steam from boiling stews, and the smells of herbs and spices, a small slight figure might be seen: a boy playing softly to himself upon an execrable violin.

All manner of delicious fancies danced before his eyes,—faint, fleeting memories of the blue sky over Florence, the street-ballads, and the flowers; his father and mother, his home,—the scene of a thousand childish pranks,—and the old Franciscan monk playing his guitar. . . . Then dreams of coming days, when he should be rich and famous, and men should bow down before him instead of ordering him about. The violin music would quiver to a bare thread. The boy's eyes, big and dancing, would fix themselves upon the Future. . . .

An angry call from the awe-inspiring head-cook. The banquet of Mademoiselle would soon have to be served: where *was* that *galopin?* "Baptiste! Baptiste!"

Down would go the violin, and away would go the dreams, and Baptiste, the scullion, would hasten to turn a spit, or bear a great dish to some impatient attendant.

Now it happened that the Comte de Nogent, a French noble who greatly admired Mademoiselle, once passed near enough Her Highness's kitchen to hear a faint echo of music. He stopped, listening to the elusive melody, and then made his way toward the sound. He had an unusually keen ear and a good taste in music, and he thought that he recognised a master-hand.

When, to his questions he was told,—"Oh, it is only

Baptiste, the *galopin!*" he was more interested than before. He lost no time in telling Mademoiselle of the genius buried among the pots and pans of her kitchen. The Duchesse promptly summoned Baptiste, and, being as quick in her kind impulses as she was with her unkind, she promoted him from the position of a scullion to that of a musician in her own orchestra. This, of course, would have been a high honour for a much older artist, and, after waiting and planning and hoping for so long, Baptiste could hardly believe that he was not still in a day-dream in the noisy, smoke-filled kitchen.

However, he had seen the last of the kitchen, and of his wretched little violin. As one of Mademoiselle's violinists he had a good instrument, and, for the first time in his life, a musical atmosphere. Thus did he enter upon his third chapter.

He became Mademoiselle's especial favourite, and often was singled out from the rest to play and sing for her alone. She grew to like the boy immensely, and was very kind to him. But Baptiste had not forgotten her first reception of him: "I said a *pretty* Italian boy!" Nor had he forgiven her for it. So he remained as hostile inwardly as he was ingratiating and devoted outwardly.

He had a peculiarly quick and timely wit, and a decided poetical gift, and often made comic songs for the entertainment of Mademoiselle's household. This

ability of his was the eventual cause of his dismissal from the Orléans palace.

It happened one day that Lully composed a song of particularly clever words and infectious melody. For good reasons he did not sing it to Mademoiselle, but he did to every one else in the palace. It was laughed at, whispered over, and surreptitiously hummed by the whole household. The musicians, the ladies-in-waiting, the courtiers, the members of the guard, and the servants were each and all amused by its wit and pleased by its air.

And then came the cataclysm!

Mademoiselle came, quite unexpectedly, upon a group of delighted listeners, with Lully in the centre, singing very softly a verse of his new song. Mademoiselle listened also for a brief minute, being petrified by horror and rage. For the song was a satirical one, and held up to ridicule no less a person than La Grande Mademoiselle herself!

Mademoiselle's punishments were invariably swift and certain. Lully left the palace that day.

He was still only seventeen, but his brilliant work in Mademoiselle's Band of Musicians had won for him a certain degree of renown. With characteristic hardihood he presented himself at Versailles with a petition that the young King, Louis XIV., should give him an appointment. Louis knew of him, and so did Dumanoir, the director of the "Violons du Roy." He

was accordingly given a position in this celebrated orchestra, which was composed of violins, violas and basses to the number of twenty-four, and was sometimes called the "Quatre-Vingt Violons du Roy."

So well did Lully acquit himself that the King founded for him a second orchestra, which was called "La Petite Bande (The Little Band)," or "Les Petits Violons de sa Majesté (His Majesty's Little Violins)." And thus did Jean Baptiste Lully, adventurer and musician, reach that sun-illumined chapter of success which was to extend over the remainder of his days.

He had the brains to appreciate that, gifted and talented as he was, he was not a thoroughly trained musician. Therefore, as soon as his place was assured, and he was in a position to afford it, he began a rigid course of musical study,—all the while fulfilling his duties as Director of Les Petits Violons.

His masters were Metru, Roberdet, and Gigault, all musicians of note, and organists to St. Nicholas-des-Champs. From them he learned the laws of composition, as well as to play both the organ and harpsichord.

Gustave Chouquet says that Lully devoted himself to the interests of "la Petite Bande" only until he had won the position at Court which he desired, and was likely to gain the title of "Surintendant de la Musique du Roy," and that he took no further interest in the Little Violins when their usefulness to him had

been exhausted. "This point once gained," says M. Chouquet, "nothing further was heard of the 'Petite Bande,' and by the beginning of the next reign it had wholly disappeared."

This element of selfishness in Lully's make-up is recognised by everyone who has studied his life. William H. Husk says that he "lost no opportunity of ingratiating himself with men of rank, a useful process for which he had a special gift."

From this it may be imagined that Lully was what we would term a "snob," and that he had a love for the titles and insignia of greatness. This deduction would be quite inaccurate. Lully was gregarious—even democratic,—and had a touch of scorn for pomp and panoply, the scorn which artists and men of noble birth have in a more marked degree than the rest of the world. It was not from a servile worship of the trade-marks of high estate that he so assiduously cultivated the prominent nobles at Court, but from a motive even less admirable. He wished to secure every possible advantage for his own advancement and aggrandisement. He knew that in a city like Paris, and a Court like Louis le Grand's, every influential friend had a value. And so he talked and jested and made himself charming to every one, varying the stereotyped Court flattery by the far cleverer expedient of audacity.

He made many friends,—among whom was Molière,

who was very fond of him and helped him in several ways. But his best friend was the King. From the first, his influence over Louis was extraordinary, and it seemed that no favour was too great for the King to bestow upon "his Baptiste," as he always called him.

Lully soon began writing Ballets as Pierre Guédron had done,—Ballets in which both he and the King danced with much success. Lully was a good actor, as we have seen, and appeared in several of Molière's plays for which he had written the incidental music. He began more and more to consider the possibilities and the development of dramatic vocal music. Theatrical to his finger-tips he worked incessantly to perfect the operatic form.

This style of composition had been faintly sketched in the Ballets of Guédron and others of his predecessors, as well as in the "musical plays" of Cambert and the Abbé Perrin, both contemporaries of his own. But it was in the "Eurydice" of Peri and other subsequent works of the new Italian school that he found the real germ which he wished to bring to maturity. So well did he succeed in amplifying and completing his idea, that he is known to-day as the "Father of French Opera."

He is more than this. Dramatic or operatic music has always had its effect, either temporary or lasting, upon the growth of song. No one could deny the enormous influence which Wagner has had upon the

dramatic or descriptive lyrics of modern times, and just as strongly did Lully's operatic work colour the subsequent songs of France. Moreover, although Lully is far from being a song-composer in the strict sense, he had to a signal extent the gift which is the very essence and soul and individuality of Song,—the instinct for melody. The airs in his operas are as spontaneous as the most purely lyric folk-songs, as well as being possessed of a finish which is the product of musical cultivation. The introduction of this great operatic composer among the song-writers requires this word of explanation to the public at large. But to those who have carefully studied Lully and his immediate successors, the choice will seem less odd. Fertility of melodic invention, dramatic feeling wedded to smooth rhythmic forms, perfect harmony between words and music, and a lyrical phrasing most happily adapted to the requirements of the voice—these are the conspicuous features of Lully's *Soli*, and also of the compositions of every great song-composer that ever lived.

Among Lully's most delightful and characteristic songs are "Cruel Amour (*Alcione*)," "Sans Alceste (*Alceste*)," "Aimez Roland à Votre Tour (*Roland*)," and the "Chanson de la Bergère" from "Armide." The last-named of these is one of the very few entirely joyous melodies ever written in a minor key. It is a worthy companion-air to Rossini's "Già la luna." The

words of this lyric from "Armide" are by Quinault, who wrote almost all of Lully's librettos, and are as follows:

"Less amazing 't would be if the spring in its splendour
Should bring no flow'rs nor breezes to fragrantly move,
Than if these, the best days of our lives, and most tender,
Should be bare of joy and of love!"

The Abbé Bourdelot tells of a young beauty of Louis's Court who went mad, like Ophelia, on account of an unhappy love-affair. There seemed no hope that her sanity could ever be restored, until to the great Court Doctor who attended her came a brilliant inspiration. He selected a number of the King's best musicians and secreted them behind some draperies in the mad girl's room every night. There they played melodies by Lully with great sweetness and softness, until by slow degrees her madness slipped away from her on the gracious airs, and she became cured.

Lully was made Court Composer, "Surintendant de la Musique de la Chambre," and "Maître de Musique" to the Royal family. He was also ennobled by the King, and enabled to restore the "de" of nobility to his name.

When he was twenty-nine he married Madeline Lambert, daughter of the singer Lambert. She brought him an ample dowry, and, being a very frugal person, succeeded in helping him to save and economise until he owned an enormous fortune.

Lully was both ambitious and avaricious, and, as Husk says, "he possessed neither honour nor morals." Whoever thwarted him was bound to go under, and, if he never forgot a slight, he also never took the trouble to remember a kindness. He did not know the meaning of the word loyalty, and considered generosity but a form of investment.

When he was temporarily in pecuniary straits, Molière advanced him a large sum of money. Yet in after years Lully treated Molière with a complete lack of gratitude and consideration.

Probably he was guilty of the most underhand performance of his career when he stole from the Abbé Perrin and Cambert their theatre-patent. They, with Henri Guichard, the librettist, and some artistic noblemen who were willing to back the enterprise financially, had laid brilliant plans for the art work which they would accomplish in this theatre. Lully feared that they would interfere with his success, and determined that not only should they not have the theatre but that he would.

He went to Madame de Montespan and induced her to get from the King the transfer of the theatre-license from Perrin to himself. With de Montespan and Lully bringing all their influence to bear, the King agreed with small demur, and the theatre,—literally stolen,—was placed in Lully's hands. He further succeeded in introducing in the wording of the patent

Maître de Musique, and watched the troops of gaily dressed dancers swaying and circling under the rustling trees. Here they heard the "Alceste, vous pleurez,"—the "little duet" of which Naumann speaks with so much admiration, and that intoxicating Chorus of Shepherds and Shepherdesses in "Armide," the following text of which is again Quinault's:

"Ah, folly deep, and errors rife,
To fail to dance away this life!
To reckless love and laughing plays
Give all the flying wonder-days!"

It was just after the completion of this same "Armide" that Lully fell ill once more. This time he really believed that he was going to die, and he sent for his Confessor.

After he had mentioned a few of his dishonourable actions, the Confessor refused to grant absolution until he had committed the terrible penance of burning the score of his "Armide." Lully made violent objections, but the priest remaining firm, he finally agreed. The score was burned, and the master musician was absolved from his sins.

Next day Lully was better. In came the Prince de Conti, much perturbed.

"Baptiste! Baptiste!" he cried. "What is this I hear? You have thrown your beautiful work into the fire?"

"Peace, peace, Monseigneur," returned Lully, smil-

ing cheerfully from his pillow. "I knew what I was doing,—*I have a copy!*"

In the space of fourteen years, Lully, with Quinault for his librettist, composed twenty operas, in addition to the thirty Ballets which he wrote to amuse the King, and which never were published. He worked incessantly, indefatigably and conscientiously. In reviewing his life of avarice, deceit, selfishness and cold-heartedness, this is the one fact upon which we may dwell with genuine respect. Says Naumann: "The only ray of light in the sorry spectacle is that when Lully had climbed to the summit of his worldly glory he did not lapse into artistic idleness, but set to work with tenfold vigour to elevate the national music-drama." The final unpardonable sin in Lully would have been an inept and indolent enjoyment of success.

After an illness of the King's, Lully wrote a "Te Deum" expressive of the national pleasure in the royal recovery. While conducting this composition the orchestra made a slip in the time. Lully, in his rage and his wish to accentuate the rhythm unmistakably, beat time so furiously that he struck his foot violently with his baton. It was discovered that he had wounded himself seriously, and in a very short time was the victim of a severe case of blood-poisoning.

Monseigneur de Vendôme offered the Marquis de Carrelt, a physician, two thousand pistoles if he

should cure him. But the Marquis was more than half a charlatan, and was quite incapable of coping with so grave a condition.

Jean Baptiste de Lully died on Saturday, March 22d, 1687, aged fifty-four. His death was in one of his four houses,—that which stood in the Rue de la Ville-l'Éveque,—and he was surrounded by his family,—consisting of his wife and six children. It was characteristic that he should die chanting, with dramatic fervour, a song of penitence!

The Court mourned his loss, and his heirs overcame their naturally parsimonious habits in order to erect for him a superb monument in the Church of the Petits Péres. The Latin epitaph was composed by Santeul, and the marble was carved by Colton, the sculptor. Such were the tributes paid to the memory of the greatest master of music and one of the most influential men in all France,—he who had begun his career as the scullion of La Grande Mademoiselle.

But these gorgeous honours were yet insufficient to hide the unbeautiful character of the dead man. Only in his music may his warped and acrid spirit be forgotten, his ungenerous deeds be forgiven, and his whole strange personality lifted into something comprehensible and fine.

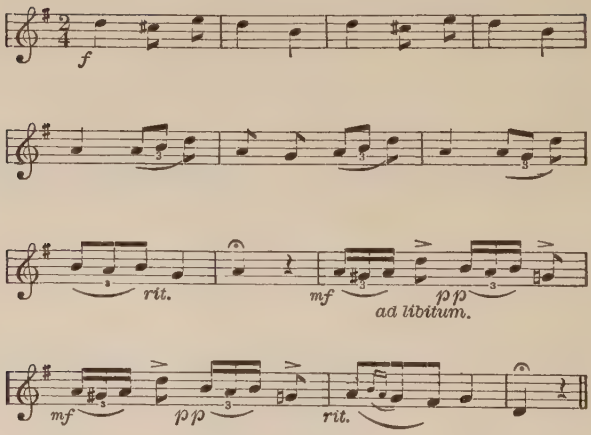
Music was his friend, his goddess, and his defender. When he was little Giovanni Battista, learning to play the guitar from the old Franciscan monk, under the

turquoise sky of Florence, it was Music who quieted his restless feet and softened his perverse heart.

And to-day, as we stare mercilessly upon the records of wrongs and frauds that blot the brightness of his remarkable career, it is Music who slips between and lays a tender, protesting hand across our eyes.

THE RUNOS OF THE NORTHLAND

HERDSMAN'S CALL



XIII

THE RUNOS OF THE NORTHLAND

"And though the deeds of man-folk were not yet waxen old,
Yet had they tales for song-craft, and the blossoming garth
of rhyme,
Tales of the framing of all things, and the entering in of
time
From the halls of the outer heaven,—so near they knew its
door.
Wherefore up rose a sea-king, and his hands that loved the
oar
Now dealt with the rippling harp-gold; and he sang of the
shaping of earth,
And how the stars were lighted, and where the winds had
birth,
And the gleam of the first of summers on the yet untrodden
grass. . . ."

Thus wrote William Morris, juggler with strange, rare thought-colours, master of wind-like, wave-like word-tones, and interpreter of the cryptic soul of the ancient North.

The writings of such poets are invaluable, if one is striving to understand the music,—which means the heart,—of such a people as those of Scandinavia. Without the glimpses of light shed by the illumined ones who know we grope blindly in the darkness of

strange standards and alien sympathies. Not only are we frustrated by the difficulties of meagre information and imperfect records, but we are balked above all by the unwillingness of the Northland to be understood at any cost.

At first we are a trifle awed, even repelled by the bigness and grimness of the world we are trying to explore. We find there strength that is superhuman, courage that is barbaric, melancholy that is profound and hopeless, passion that is without tenderness, emotions that seem always either savage or sad, and that often are both. There appears to be gaiety there,—not happiness, but a wild, cold sort of exhilaration to which we find it harder to respond than to the depression which otherwise prevails. We find mists and towering mountains, fir-trees and snow-filled gullies, biting winds, and black waters storming a gloomy coast. We hear the twang of rude harps or *Kanteles*, and hear rough voices chanting unintelligible syllables and dreary airs. And we draw back, chilled and discouraged. How hope to look into the hearts of these strange folk, and master the inherent motives and sentiments of their national songs?

But after striving and struggling, after much patience and many prayers to Odin and the rest, the time comes when the grey cold mists part a little, and we begin to see cattle in the shadow of the big dark hills, and smoke rising from the wind-swept valleys.

We begin to discover the humanity which is burning brightly even among the ice-fields. We see not only sea-folk, and men who know how to fight and to die, but the makers and warders of homes. We hear the *Lur* or cow-horn calling in the herds at sunset, and see the women spinning or knitting by red-lighted hearth-stones. And the eternal minor note in their music ceases to be dreary, and becomes touching, and the dearth of light or tender feeling in their ballads resolves itself into the reticence of a race proverbially silent.

We find that here are a people far less unfriendly than we dreamed, a people full of poetic feeling, and loving music with all the fervour of peculiarly intense natures; a people who pour their melancholy into their songs as the Spaniards of old poured their inconsequent joys and headlong passions into theirs; as the Troubadours poured their love-fancies, and the good Meistersingers their conscientious pedantry.

And so we enter at last into the spirit of the country. And in time we grow to love the quaint sad Runos, as they call these ancient ballads of theirs, and seem to find in their odd intervals and rhythm, their sudden pauses and unexpected cadences,—wonderful little pictures of long, dark, dream-haunted years in the world of the North.

And thus begins the study of Scandinavian Folk-Song.

By Scandinavia, we mean Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Lapland, Finland and Denmark—all the mysterious silent Northland. It is as much of an enigma nationally as the East,—almost as inscrutable, if possibly less profound. Our nearest approach to understanding it is in our childhood, usually, through the genius of that poet-magician, Hans Christian Andersen.

We all know how eagerly we used to read of fjords, and lakes, and marshes, and water-spirits, and reindeer, and wolves, and other queer delightful Northern things; and can surely remember those wonderful days when Gerda's journey to the Palace of the Snow Queen was a thrilling fact, and the Marsh King's daughter was not only a pathetic and charming person, but very much alive. Dear Hans Christian Andersen,—all the children of all the world form your kingdom;—and all the children of all the world thank you, because you have given them the freedom of the Country of Dreams.

From the beginning of things the Scandinavian nations have been imaginative and beauty-loving, in spite of their exterior coldness and gloom. Their epic-poems have always been standards of free, wild poetry, and few races know so well how to sing of gods and heroes and big elementary matters. They know, too, how to imprison nature-pictures in a few words and notes. The breath of their ice-chilled mountain winds is in their Runos and their *Kämpevisor*

(battle-songs or heroic songs) and their effects are always of a large, bold and noble order.

There is almost no lyrical music, according to our standards. There are love songs, it is true, but almost invariably they are of a fierce and even untender order, proclaiming loyalty and passion, but few of the pretty illusions with which the South likes to play.

A good example of the love-poetry of the North is to be found in the following strange little lyric,—much sung in Finland, and known as the "Love Song of the Finnish Maiden":

[1]"If my Well-Known should come,
My Often-Seen should appear,
I would snatch a kiss from his mouth
Though it were tainted with wolf's blood;
I would seize and press his hand,
If a serpent were at the end of it;
If the wind had a mind,
If the breeze had a tongue,
To hear and bring back the vows
Which two lovers exchange.

"All dainties would I disregard,
Even the Vicar's savoury meat,
Rather than forsake the friend of my heart,
The wild game of my summer's hunting,
The darling of my winter's taming."

Such a girl as this seems to paint her own picture in her words. One can easily imagine her,—straight,

[1]Translation by Edward Daniel Clarke.

strong and fearless, clear-eyed and unashamed, truthful and daring in her love as she would be in her hate, capable of gentleness, doubtless, but utterly incapable of putting it into words, a creature as clean as the snow, as strong as the sea, as passionate as the storm,—the woman of the Northland.

The Folk-Song of a people must always be very close of necessity to their immediate interests and every-day considerations. If there is a ruling passion or an ever-present fear in a nation, be certain that you will find it flourishing in nine-tenths of its ballads.

The deep-rooted terror of wolves in certain parts of the North gave birth to the following brief song of Lapland, which is still sung, although it is very ancient indeed:

[1]"Accursed wolf, far hence,—away!
Make in these woods no longer stay;
Fly hence! And seek earth's utmost bounds,
Or perish, by the hunter's wounds!"

One may easily imagine this "Song to the Wolf," as it is called, chanted by the hunters as they fly over the snow fields, with knives ready for the fierce beasts to whom their song is addressed.

The *Kämpevisor* are for the most part extraordinary productions. They are declamatory and almost without rhythm or melody save for the *Omkväd*, or refrain.

Nearly all are minor, and many are in such time

[1]Translation by Joseph Acerbi.

as 5/4 or 7/4. Moreover the majority were composed to be sung to the *Kantele*,—a harp-like instrument with five strings, G, A, B♭, C and D,—which, as may readily be seen, form the foundation for a peculiarly plaintive class of airs.

Almost the best example of Epic Song within our reach is that upon Sigurd's battle with the Dragon. It is very old, and, when finally notated, had to be taken down from the lips of singers in Norway, whose *ad libitum* style of singing made it very difficult to catch the rhythm. It is really an interesting piece of music, though its weirdness may be imagined from the following strange bars which occur just before the *Omkväd:*

"Back in the world's beginning" they made it, the old Scolds and Runojas. They were not ordinary singers, it is certain, but some "masters of song-craft" such as William Morris describes:

". . . The mightiest men that cast
The sails of the storm of battle adown the bickering blast."

With an accompaniment of wind playing wailing battle music among the bending fir-trees, they fashioned the song of Sigurd, while yet,—who knows?—

his great deeds may have been close enough to be remembered and sung in exultation and in awe.

The great Scandinavian King, Regner Lodbrog, composed many splendid *Kämpevisor*, full of the almost savage courage of the Northland, and giving remarkable glimpses of the hold which their mythology had upon these Vikings and warriors. One, roughly translated, runs as follows:

"My courage tells me that death is near.
Already the Divinities sent for me by Odin
Invite me to enter his Dwelling Place.
Seated high at his table,
I shall then, with much good cheer,
Drink of the rare mead that he will offer me.
The hours of my life are ended:
I die, laughing!"

The following, also the composition of Regner, is more savage, and even more characteristic of his race and land:

"We have stricken off the heads of these our enemies with our swords!
But that which causeth me my greatest joy
Is that Odin hath bidden me shortly to his feast.
Soon I shall drink my fill of mead there,
Mead foaming from a curved drink-horn!
And with neither fear nor trembling shall I present myself at the Palace!"

Truly here were men worthy to sit at wine "with the gods of the Elder Days,"—men to whom life was a battle-ground, pain a triumphant test of courage, sor-

row a jest,—grim, but good,—and death an invitation to a banquet!

The verses just quoted,—if verses they could be called,—were sung to inconceivably wild and barbaric melodies. The last-cited one has attached to it an air of particularly poignant tragedy, mingled with a fierce exultation which makes its intervals quite incomprehensible to a civilised ear. But one would like to have seen him,—this King Regner who laughed at death, and gloried in Odin's invitation to his table,—and to have heard him chant his wild strange songs of bloodshed, and dying, and the drink-horns of the gods!

It was not only the mountain and sea folk who made songs. There were court minstrels in ancient Norway, Denmark and Sweden, as in other lands. They had their measure of musical cultivation, and in many cases had learned their art in foreign lands. Though these men wrote music less typically Scandinavian than the pure folk-songs, they deserve honourable mention in musical history.

Poetry and music were popular in all the old Scandinavian Courts. Many were the men who won fame and honour by their gift of song. There was that noted minstrel of the eleventh century, the great Jarlaskald, a contemporary of those mighty sons of the immortal Sigurd: Harald and Magnus the Good. There was Arnold of Iceland, attached to the Court

of Waldemar the Great, King of Denmark. There were Acquinus the Swede, Gustav Vasa, Torstenius Johannes, Jean Fortejo, Melchior, Borchgrevinck, Dühen, Sartorius, Bauwart, Biedermann, Meibomius, and many others. And they made great quantities of stirring songs for the delectation of those long-ago, semi-barbaric courts.

Says Soubies: "Those regions possess one of the most essential elements for great poetry and great art, and that is a past that is rich in heroic traditions and epic memories. Parallel with this vein of secular legends run the peculiarly grand and severe nature of the country,—a sort of nature most favourable to an aptitude for revery. It engenders a disposition in melancholy souls to the sentiments whence come the songs of the people,—songs of rare colour and penetrating accent."

The great Liszt, whose insight into the souls of men was truly that of the magician they termed him, expressed much of the spirit of the Northland singers when he wrote:

"The Scandinavian Bards faced a frigid Nature who imposed upon their senses a great fear,—fear of a climate rarely lighted even by a passing smile. Therefore they exalted courage to a point of almost voluptuous indulgence, and Walhalla offered them not so much a recompense for their achievements as an opportunity for fresh combats and incessant victories."

But they had an Orpheus once in Finland,—a singer of gentler Runos, and an awakener of tenderer dreams. He lived in mythological days, and he was a demi-god. His name was Wäinämöinen,—mercifully corrupted to Vainamoinen, which is quite bad enough. And, like the other Orpheus, he could charm the wild things into submission, and even draw the timid sprites of wood and woo them from their most secret hiding places. He would sit in the forest, so goes the legend, and play upon his harp, and sing most sweetly and melodiously, until the big bear came lumbering from his den, and the wolf crept near, his wild eyes softened by love, and the fishes poked their silver noses up through the ripples of the stream, and the big, strange birds dropped in their swift flight to listen. Then, as he played and sang, the reindeer would come down the mountain side, his antlered head upraised to hear the music, and the snake would slowly uncoil and glide close to the singer's foot. And the *Necker*, the sad, music-loving water-folk, who had lost their souls but wanted to go to heaven, would come up in shadowy crowds among the reeds, and the gay, evil satyrs that lived in trees and laughed at all things, would draw closer, in sudden gentle melancholy, while Vainamoinen sang and played upon his harp.

From this legend it is easy to see the deep hold which music has always had upon the people of the North. In Vainamoinen they incarnated the Spirit

of Music, and in the adoration of the wild things depicted their own devotion to the Goddess of Sweet Sounds. If the sounds evolved by them are sometimes far from sweet to our ears, it may be because our sense of hearing has not been subjected to the severe training of avalanches and mountain storms!

In a land where the after-glow of the worship of gods has hardly faded from the sky, it is inevitable that superstition and belief in the supernatural should abound. Every manner of sprite and elf is reputed to inhabit those far away Northern forests, and the fog is supposed to be full of spectral shapes with portents of good or ill. The spirits there are of the elemental order, inhabiting trees, brooks, lakes and hill-places, in the manner of certain Grecian and Roman beings of whom we have read in ancient poems and legends.

But the one sprite of the Northland gifted with an eternal love and gift for the art of song is the Neck, or Nixy,—the pale water-fairy who spends his or her wave-washed years in singing strange songs, to the wonder of those who pass near.

The Necker are reputed to be angels who, by permitting thoughts of sin, have fallen from Heaven, and are doomed to be fairy-folk until by some marvellous, merciful chance they win back their souls. Hans Andersen, in his sad little tale of the Mermaid who won her soul through love, has touched most gracefully upon this old superstition. Many other writers

have made it the subject for stories and poems,—Dante Gabriel Rossetti among others. But the land of the North is full of legends more interesting and poetic than any which the writers of other tongues have been able to originate or even plagiarise. The "Oxonian in Thelemarken" (Norway) says:

"Like the Daoineshi of the Scotch Highlands, the Neck of Scandinavia shines in a talent for music. Poor creatures! The peasantry may well fancy they are fallen angels who hope some day for forgiveness; for was not one heard, near Hornbogabro, in West Gotland, singing to a sweet melody, 'I know, I know, I know that my Redeemer liveth'? And did not a Neck, when some boys once said to him, 'What good is it for you to be sitting here and playing, for you will never enjoy eternal happiness?—begin to weep bitterly? . . ."

Among the dances of Sweden is one very graceful and charming one known as the "Neckens Polska." The melody of it is light and pretty, but it lacks the mournfulness which is so nearly inevitable in Northern music, and which would be particularly suitable in anything bearing the name of that most melancholy of elves, the Neck.

Poor Necker! Let us hope that you will all find your souls and go back to Heaven,—even though your going leave the lakes silent and the streams desolate.

The country is peculiarly rich in legends and fairy-stories, all, with practically no exceptions, incorporated in the folk-songs. With all their reserve as a nation the Scandinavians have been extraordinarily prolific in the making of songs.

There are so many songs in Jutland that at one time it was not permissible to sing the same song more than once in a year!

There is a district called the *Strickgegend*, or Knitting District, where the air is as full of folk-songs as a wood with the songs of birds. For years the custom prevailed for the peasants to meet every evening during the winter months, spin or knit woollen fabrics, and sing their songs till late into the night. Wagner in his "Flying Dutchman" has made use of this custom on a small scale. But it remains for some one to describe for us, in prose, poetry or drama, such a scene as the books of travel indicate: the roaring fire, the whirring wheels and clicking needles, the minor music of the *Langluke* (a harp-shaped violin) or the *Kantele*, the voices of the peasants, and the monotonous chant telling of the prowess of some long-dead demi-god; while outside the winter winds shriek and struggle together among the trees.

Not always are the Northern scenes accompanied by the roar of storms, however. There is peace to be found among them of a profound, because a primitive, description.

Take, for instance, the watchmen of the cities. As in all lands where the older civilisation prevails, the custom of having the streets patrolled all night by these quaint and picturesque figures is still universal. With his lantern in his hand, the Norwegian watchman wanders along between the sleeping houses, cries the hour, and reports upon wind and weather.

In Spain they had, as we know, a brief and most musical phrase to sing, but the Norwegian Watchman intones a monotonous sort of chant which is well-nigh interminable. And he sings the same one that his predecessors have been singing for centuries gone by.

In Trondhjem they sing a different kind of exhortation to prayer with every hour. Here is the one for ten o'clock:

[1] "Ho, the Watchman, ho!
The clock has struck ten,
Praised be God our Lord!
Now it is time
To go to bed,
The housewife and her maid,
The master as well as his lad.
The wind is south-east.
Hallelujah! Praised be
God our Lord."

We all remember the Watchman in "*Die Meistersinger*" with his "*Lobet Gott den Herrn*"! Evidently

[1] Translation by De Capell Brooke.

City Watchmen, whether in Nuremberg or Norway, will always be much the same!

Then, as was said at the beginning of this article, there is a gentle and quiet side to the country-life in the North. The most melodious form of music which one finds there is the Herdsman's call. This, having various airs, is always of the same character, and is employed by the peasants, both men and women, to call the herds and flocks down from the hills. With it goes the nasal note of the *Lur*. By the bye, it is a cow-horn which Wagner gives to the afore-mentioned Watchman. One may imagine from that what it sounds like;—far from tuneful, we may wager! But the Calls themselves are charming. They are more unequivocally *melodies* than any music in all Scandinavia, and have a plaintive lilt of their own which is essentially characteristic, and could have been conceived by no other people.

The one which will be found at the beginning of this article is one of the loveliest. Like all Scandinavian music, whether harsh or graceful, it paints a picture. In this case it seems to be that of a mountain slope flaming with the light of the cold Northern sunset, mists lying white and still on a Neck-haunted lake, some clear-eyed girl with the *Lur* held to her lips, standing on the rocky pathway, while the herds come slowly down from among the trees above her on the hill. Down in the valley somewhere a fire is waiting, supper,

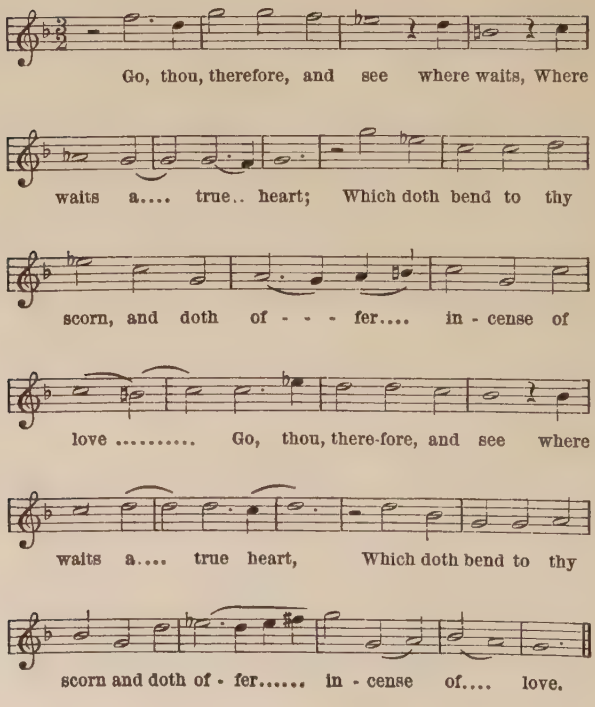
and the spinning wheel. And later there will be songs and legends of the heroes that are dead and the sprites that are living.

Yet, with all our effort and with all our occasional confidence in success, have we indeed, in our study of these mysterious folk, crept one step farther upon the road of understanding? We have seen a few pictures and listened to a few songs; we have exulted in fragmentary glimpses of the veiled secrets of sentiment and emotion. But the true Scandinavia,—the everlasting North,—have we really touched her sealed, strange heart for but the shadow of a passing moment?

I fear if she heard the question she would smile, as who should say: "When you have understood the secrets of Silence, and the Mysteries of Dreams, the heart of the Sphinx, and the Soul of Religion, when you have learned why Life was, and what Death will be, and the age of the eternal stars,—you may understand Me!"

THE ROMANCE OF STRADELLA

AIR FROM THE "SERENATA"


Go, thou, therefore, and see where waits, Where
waits a.... true.. heart; Which doth bend to thy
scorn, and doth of - - - fer.... in - cense of
love ..... Go, thou, there-fore, and see where
waits a.... true heart, Which doth bend to thy
scorn and doth of - fer..... in - cense of.... love.

XIV

THE ROMANCE OF STRADELLA

NEVER in musical history has there been so mysterious a person as Alessandro Stradella. For some strange reason no one knows anything definite about him, but everyone a great deal that is indefinite. Why all the reliable records are silent concerning this really great composer will never be known,—nor why, in the absence of definite facts, people should have taken the trouble to invent so much fiction. But it is true that most of our information concerning him seems to be the result of vague report, vivid imagination, or simple, flagrant error. One writer declares: "No musician has ever been the subject of more unwarrantable romancing than he." Another says, in reference to Bourdelot's famous account of the composer's life and death: "How can we believe a statement . . . that was made simply on the faith of Court gossip?"

But in spite of these and other statements rejecting the accuracy of the story, the Romance of Stradella will always be popular, and, what is more, it will always be credited by at least half the reading world. If no man can prove it true, at least no man can prove it

false! And, for the rest, there are several interesting facts of history which were preserved for us by "Court gossip."

And so, admitting in the very beginning that they all may be unfounded, we will turn our attention to such incidents as are written down in Bourdelot's book. He was the first romancer on the subject,—if indeed it be all romancing,—and the other romancers have copied him obediently. We are really obliged to, for I doubt if many of us have the imagination to invent so good a story as his!

The Abbé Bourdelot was a charming person,—even if he knew nothing about music and wrote about it as though it were Black Magic or poison ivy. And who knows that his "Court gossip" was untrue? He vouches for the facts, and his book impresses one, at least, as being ingenuous.

So here is the romance of Stradella. He was born somewhere about 1645,—Bourdelot and Wanley say in Venice, Burney, Fétis and Naumann in Naples. Let us take the Abbé's word in favour of Venice, even though Naumann insists that he belonged to the Neapolitan school.

"He was a comely person," says Wanley, "and of an amorous nature."

Signor Muzzicato appears to think this statement quite unjustifiable, since there is no authentic description of Stradella extant, but it seems, on the whole,

a most reasonable deduction. The "Penny Cyclopedia's" assertions, which also annoy Signor Muzzicato intensely, are, it must be admitted, a trifle more visionary: "Stradella was not handsome, but remarkable for his symmetry of form, his wit and polished manners."

But when a man presents so mysterious and romantic a figure as this long-dead maker of madrigals, a certain poetic license should be permitted anyone who attempts to write of him. After all, since the authorities declare that nothing can be proved concerning his life, what could one say about him if forbidden to use one's imagination? Let us, therefore, assume, by all means, that he was "a comely person, and of an amorous nature," and that, though not strictly handsome, "he was remarkable for the symmetry of his form, his wit, and polished manners."

Other statements almost as hopeless to substantiate, according to Signor Muzzicato, are Hawkins's that "he was an exquisite performer on the harp;" Burney's that "he was a great performer on the violin;" Wanley's that "he excelled in an extraordinary hand, so much so as to have been accounted the best organist in Italy;" and Catalani's that "he was a Latin and perhaps also an Italian poet." However, since we are romancing, let us accept them all!

In any case no one denies that he was a great composer, who helped to develop the Cantata, and wrote

exquisite madrigals, ariettas, and canzonets. He was a really marvellous lyric-maker, writing the purest and most poetic style of melody imaginable. His madrigal "All' apparir del Sole" is charming, but clings to the old polyphonic methods. It is in his compositions for single voices that his melodic gift is easily seen. Unfortunately we have few authentic songs of his, though we have several which are wrongly attributed to him.

The "Serenata,"—a masque or *pastorale*,—though it has been pronounced crude by masters of harmony has a wonderful atmosphere, and a charm quite its own. Rockstro calls it "the work that Handel honoured by borrowing from it." In this "*divertimento*" each lover brings a coachful of musicians to serenade the "Dama" whom both love. In the complications that ensue there is some delightful music. "The Sinfonia" is rather clattering and disappointing, but the vocal parts are all that could be desired. The delicious aria "Amor, amor!" is too long to be given in its entirety, but the "Ite dunque a cercar" at the end of this song is the best of all. It is built upon two lines:

"Ite dunque cercar dov'è quel core
Che s'atterri al di sprezzo o incensi amore.
(Go thou therefore and see where waits a humble heart
Which doth bend to thy scorn and doth offer incense of love.)"

Stradella's music is wonderfully delicate. It suggests moonlight and fine-carven traceries on marble. Its warmth,—for it is warm now and then,—is the warmth of summer-kissed flowers. Note the magical cadence of the "incensi amore" and see if the effect is not actually that of incense.

But to return to the Romance.

There was a certain nobleman in Venice named Contarini. He was a man of great influence and high standing, and had a real or a cultivated taste for music. He did all that he could to further the cause of melody in Venice,—perhaps because the woman he loved was a singer. Her name was Ortensia (Burney says Hortensia); we know her to have been gifted and charming, and believe her to have been beautiful. And Burney says that she was possessed of "many estimable qualities."

Ortensia's voice was a very lovely one, and she had a fair amount of musical education, but her singing had not been perfected to the limit of its possibilities, and she had never reached great heights in her performances.

Now at this time Stradella was what Bourdelot calls "the fashionable musician" of Venice. By what steps he had attained the position has never been told by the romancers. He was then about thirty, and the most brilliant composer of his land and day. Contarini had heard him sing and play and knew his com-

positions. Here, thought the nobleman, was a musician worthy to teach even the wonderful Ortensia whom he adored. He determined that with Stradella and Stradella alone should she study to perfect her voice.

He spoke of the matter to Ortensia, and she said that it would give her pleasure to let the young maestro teach her. So Contarini, a violent man, but possessed of a great love for her, was overjoyed to have pleased her, and betook himself away to seek out Stradella.

Poor Ortensia! If she might but come back to us, and tell us just how it all happened two centuries ago! I think she was a typical Venetian, with gold-red hair and sad eyes. For some reason,—doubtless because of her terrible death,—Ortensia seems a tragic figure. One cannot think of her as laughing or jesting,—only leaning on some stone window-ledge and staring wistfully out over the silent canals and blue-washed spaces of Venice:

> "Mid the waves
> Of the City of Graves."

She was one upon whom Fate had laid a compelling finger from the beginning, and there was an endless shadow in her eyes.

Stradella came. The master musician and the singer, both young and both children of Venice, looked into each other's eyes, and with a mutual sense of wonder the singing lessons began.

In reference to this situation Bourdelot remarks, naïvely: "I only say what I know when I speak of the dangers there are in giving young masters to young and beautiful ladies to teach them music. For it must often happen that an amorous song sung very tenderly makes an impression upon the heart of any young person!"

Burney treats the matter as follows: ". . . Hortensia's love for music and admiration for the talents of her instructor, by frequent access soon gave birth to a passion of a different kind, and like Héloïse, she found that though at first

> "'Guiltless she gaz'd and listened while he sung,
> While science flow'd seraphic from his tongue,
> From lips like his the precepts too much move:
> They music taught,—but more, alas! to love.'

"And accordingly she and her master became mutually enamoured of each other."

And yet,—Bourdelot and Burney to the contrary, —it was not the music. It was youth, and fate,—and Venice!

The enchantment of countless centuries hung in impalpable mists above the room where they worked and sang together,—the enchantment of the most mystically wonderful city in the world. All the ghosts of dead loves and forgotten passions that had ever burned themselves out beside the Adriatic crowded close with voiceless whispers. How should Stradella

and Ortensia, thus surrounded with magic, resist the spells that the ancient sages knew no way of breaking?

Moreover, they were young, and the world was a marvellous place, filled with all manner of joys and glories for two lovers young and strong of heart, who, hand in hand, should go forth to seek them.

So, one purple and silver night, when the wind stole in with a thrill in its low tone, bearing echoes from the song of the Adriatic, they went away together. Stradella drew the great dark cloak about Ortensia, and covered her hair with its big hood, and helped her into the gondola that was waiting. Then they glided away among the shadows.

Eastcott says: "It was a fine night." . . . And though Signor Muzzicato may disapprove of the unauthorised statement, no one else will find fault with it. Yes, it was a fine night, even if the stars were obscured, and the rain drenched the hood above Ortensia's hair.

Next day they were in Rome.

When Contarini discovered the flight of the woman he loved with the teacher he had recommended, his rage was supreme,—rage against her quite as much as against Stradella. The nobleman had loved Ortensia as much as he could love anyone, but when he knew that she had eloped with another man, his jealous fury engulfed all milder sentiments, and his sole desire was for revenge. Consequently he sent for two ruffians

known to be beyond scruples when it was a matter of money. Men called them assassins, or professional murderers. He ordered them to follow Stradella and Ortensia to Rome, where he had found that they had gone, and to kill them both. For this he promised the men one hundred pistoles, fifty to be paid in advance, and their expenses! The assassins were satisfied with the terms, and set out for Rome.

Now it chanced that upon the very night of the cutthroats' arrival in the Eternal City, Stradella was playing his new Oratorio upon the organ of St. John Lateran. The Oratorio was "San Giovanni Battista," a composition in two parts, which is still celebrated. The assassins, in order to gain advantages in the way of time and opportunity, entered the church. And then, according to the historians (or romancers), a wonderful thing happened.

Stradella sat at the organ playing. There is a legend that he played "Pietà, Signor," the great religious aria which is on sale to-day under his name. But as it has been proved conclusively that he did not even write this song, the legend loses much of its convincing quality. It was almost certainly some portion of the "San Giovanni Battista" that worked the miracle. The assassins were overcome, first by amazement, then admiration, then awe, and finally penitence. To kill a man like this,—a man who could bring Heaven to earth, and thrill the innermost recesses of

the soul with indescribable harmonies! Who would dare commit such a crime? The impressive religious atmosphere and the beauty of the music so played upon the emotions of the ruffians that they determined to go to Stradella and tell him the story of their change of heart; and also to warn him of Contarini's blood-thirsty intentions.

So, when the musician and Ortensia were leaving the church, they were accosted by the two cutthroats, who explained the situation with perfect simplicity. Stradella thanked them for their warning, and he and Ortensia acted upon it promptly. That night they left for Turin. There the laws were known to be very strict and the military organisation most complete, and there was no possibility of escape for any criminal. The two reformed assassins went back to Venice and told Contarini that the fugitive couple had left Rome some days before, and gone to Turin. Incidentally they emphasised the hopelessness of murdering any one there, where the only places beyond the reach of the law were the embassies!

But Contarini had by no means abandoned hope yet. He next engaged three new assassins, dismissing the first two, and then went to his friend the Abbé d'Estrade, French Ambassador to Venice. He told the Abbé that he had three friends,—merchants he called them,—who wished to go to Turin on business, and he asked d'Estrade to give them letters to the French

Ambassador there. The letters were duly forthcoming, and the three "merchants" departed for Turin. They presented their letters of introduction, and M. de Villars, the French Ambassador, received them with much courtesy. They had a delightful time, calling at the embassy daily, it is said, and meeting numbers of charming people who would have run for their lives if they had guessed the character of the three.

Meanwhile, Stradella and Ortensia had told their story to the Duchess of Savoy, who was then regent and living in Turin (Filibert says Christine de France, —Muzzicato, Jeanne de Nemours; Bourdelot calls her merely "la Madame Royale"). The Regent was much interested, and most apprehensive for their safety. She sent Ortensia to a convent temporarily, for protection, and appointed Stradella her own *Maestro di Capella.* But even these kind and careful efforts were not enough to protect Stradella.

One evening, just as it had begun to grow nearly dusk, Stradella was walking on the ramparts of the city. Suddenly the three assassins attacked him, one after the other stabbing him with their daggers.

Then, as he fell to the ground, they rushed to the house of the French Ambassador, who was forced to extend them shelter.

As the news spread Turin became frantic. The entire town was in an uproar. The Regent ordered the

city gates to be closed, and sent men-at-arms to find the criminals.

Stradella was in a critical condition, but there seemed to be a chance for his recovery. The Regent gave orders that everything possible should be done for him, and indeed proved herself a rare friend in need.

When the assassins were known to be in the French Embassy she and all Turin demanded of the Ambassador that they should be given up to justice. M. de Villars, however, insisted upon protecting them until he could write to Venice and receive explanations from d'Estrade.

The Abbé wrote finally that he had known nothing of the character of the "merchants" befriended by Contarini, and expressed his indignation that two ambassadors should have been so tricked.

Needless to say, M. de Villars harboured the cutthroats no longer, but, as Stradella was recovering, he permitted them to escape from the town.

When Stradella was well again, the "Madame Royale" arranged a great wedding festival for Ortensia and him in her own palace, and the sky seemed clear again.

But though Stradella and his wife loved each other deeply and were very happy together, they both recognised the shadowy danger under which they both lived. Wherever they went a sword hung just above their heads. They did not know when it would fall.

Five years after the Turin episode they were in Genoa. Stradella had composed a cantata called "Il Barcheggio," in honour of the marriage of Carlo Spinola and Paola Brignole, and had gone to Genoa for the rehearsals.

One night,—it was just before dawn,—the instruments of Contarini's undying hatred and vengeance broke into the house where Stradella and Ortensia lived, and, creeping to their apartment, stabbed each of them through the heart. Then the murderers fled away through the darkness, and set sail just as dawn was breaking. They were never heard of again.

Stradella and Ortensia died at one and the same moment, and so began together the journey whereof no man has knowledge.

There is an old French saying (which Catelani mightily resents) to this effect: "Songs and knife-thrusts keep close company in musical Italy!"

But no one knows what really happened after all. It is only a romance, you see.

PURCELL, MASTER OF MUSICK

SONG FROM "THE TEMPEST"

Come un - to these yel - - - - - - low
sands, and then take hands; Foot it, feat - ly,
here and there, and let sweet sprites the
bur - den bear. Hark! Hark! The watch-dogs bark!
Hark! Hark! I hear the strains of Chan - ti - cleer!

XV

PURCELL, MASTER OF MUSICK

IF you should walk down Old Pye Street in Westminster, you would come to St. Anne's Lane, and there you would pass three ancient houses of red brick standing in a row,—dilapidated monuments to seventeenth century London.

At present they are peopled by ghosts only, but in 1658 the inmates were quite alive. Perhaps the ghosts still talk over the old days when "beer and skittles" were something better than memories. The phrase is used in its literal sense, for the first house in the row used to be a tavern, and the second the entrance to the skittle grounds! The tavern, the back door of which it was that opened onto St. Anne's Lane, was the Sign of the Bell and Fish, kept by Master Oldsworth, and great were the merrymakings within. 'Tis said, indeed, that Master Oldsworth lost his license because of them!

In the third red brick lived one Master Henry Purcell, Gentleman, and his wife Elizabeth,—the parents of England's greatest musical genius.

Henry Purcell, the elder, was something of a musician and a good actor, and, as he was one of the Gen-

tlemen of the Chapel Royal under Charles II., he evidently could sing. He was one of those "Gentlemen of Musick," by the bye, who were presented with four yards of "fine scarlet" for a gown to wear at the coronation services.

Pepys mentions him as a "Master of Musique."

". . . After dinner I went back to Westminster Hall. Here I met with Messrs. Lock and Purcell, Masters of Musique, and with them to the coffee-house, into a room next the water, by ourselves, where we spent an hour or two. . . ."

Matthew Lock was a close friend of the elder Purcell (and later of his illustrious son also), and indeed had acted with him in musical plays. Two years before, Sir William Davenant had taken a room behind Rutland House, Aldersgate Street, for private dramatic productions, and there both Purcell and Lock had appeared in "The Siege of Rhodes."

"Captain Cooke" acted in the same performance, for which he had also composed a portion of the music. The productions of Davenant were attended by the strictest secrecy, of course,—stage performances being against Parliamentary laws in those dark and bigoted days.

Lock was Composer in Ordinary to Charles II., and had written the music for "Ye King's sagbutts and cornets," which accompanied Charles's passage from the Tower to Whitehall at the time of his coronation.

In 1658, Henry Purcell, the composer, was born.

He could barely have made his advent into the world at an era more utterly in need of a musical genius. During the Puritan sway of the Commonwealth England had been utterly without music. The tale of how musical church services were abolished, all song-books obtainable destroyed, organs hacked to pieces, and musicians and stage-folk practically beggared is too well known to need recountal. England had been not only gloomy, cold and fettered during Cromwell's ascendancy, but dumb as well. Organ-builders,—indeed nearly all the instrument-makers,—had fled the country, theatres were non-existent, and there was not a chorister in all England!

Such musical elements as remained had been preserved by a patient and art-loving few who had waited in faith for the lifting of the darkness and the dawning of the Restoration.

With the coronation of Charles confusion reigned in the English art-world. It took years to train boys for the choirs, build new organs, and establish new theatrical organisations. So comprehensive had been the work of destruction that the men who had at heart the welfare of the national music were almost in despair.

Moreover, Charles himself was of small assistance in the musical recovery. He had brought with him from exile a love for frivolous songs and light dances,

and cared very little for genuinely artistic music. Later, however, he admired the singer Gostling so greatly that he gave him a silver egg filled with guineas, remarking that "he had heard that eggs were good for the voice!"

Altogether music in England was at its lowest ebb when Henry Purcell was born,—though it should be added that during the years immediately following the progress made in an artistic direction was magnificent. Though no great genius appeared before Purcell began to compose, the average of ability among these musicians of the Restoration was excellent.

From his babyhood Henry, or, as everyone called him, Harry Purcell was so wonderful and exquisite a being that he was known to all London as "the Beautiful Purcell." Some sketches of him still in existence show his face to have been rarely delicate and sensitive, the eyes full of dreams, and the broad forehead a patent of intellectuality. He loved all beautiful things, but especially those which appealed chiefly to his imagination. Lovely as he found the actualities of the green earth, he had even a deeper tenderness for those ethereal creations of his own fancy. Therein we see the manifestation of his superb creative faculty. It seems, in studying his work, that the entire range of natural emotions was too narrow for its full expression, and that it reverted perforce to the additional opportunities offered by the supernatural. No man

ever heard such elfin melodies, and, having heard, imprisoned them in his music as did he. As a very tiny child he must have absorbed the essence of fairy-tales as he breathed the air.

His father had dreams of the boy's becoming a composer, and knowing his own health to be in a very fragile condition, appointed his brother Thomas as Harry's guardian. Thomas Purcell also was a singer in the Chapel Royal, and a musician of fairly thorough training. These plans for Harry's education and welfare were not made too soon, for when the child was barely six years old his father died from consumption,—a tendency to which it is probable that the composer inherited.

So deep was Thomas Purcell's love for his nephew that he always spoke of him as "My son Harry," and was enormously proud of his ability. He was a rarely kindly and generous man, and his one effort was that Harry should have every comfort, advantage and pleasure obtainable;—this in spite of the fact that he was far from rich. The "Gentlemen of his Majestie's Private Musick," as they were called, did not grow affluent.

Pepys says: "Many of the Musique are ready to starve, they being five years behindhand for their wages." That Thomas Purcell was no exception to these common conditions is shown by the record of a payment made to him in 1672, by the Court Treasurer,

which reads: ". . . Due for fower yeares and three-quarters ended at Mic'mas."

The year of his father's death Harry Purcell entered the boy's choir of the Chapel Royal. He was just six years old when he thus began his musical career. It is said that at this time he was as beautiful as a small angel, and possessed of a voice in keeping with the image.

His master was a man who will always be a most interesting figure,—Captain Cooke, the "Master of the Children of the Chapel."

Captain Cooke it was, by the bye, who had appeared with Matthew Locke and Harry's father in Davenant's secret entertainment in the room back of Rutland House. He was a very good teacher, and several of his pupils besides Purcell won distinction in later years,—notably John Blow, William Turner and Pelham Humphrey, the follower of Lully. There is a story to the effect that Humphrey did so much better work than his master that Captain Cooke "*died of jealousy in* 1672." The date of his death is accurate, but for the cause stated it is difficult for a mere biographer to vouch!

Cooke had been a chorister, a student, and finally a teacher, in the Chapel Royal of Charles I. When the Civil War started he gave up singing for fighting, and was a captain in the King's army. A red-hot Royalist, he would have liked to have murdered all the

founders and warders of the Commonwealth, beginning with Cromwell, and finishing with the least obnoxious Puritan citizen! When Charles II. came to the throne, Cooke's services were recognised by his instalment as "Master of the Children." Though he had been a musician before being a soldier, he derived immense joy from his military experience, and clung fast to his title of Captain till the day of his death.

Under him Harry Purcell made such brilliant progress that when he was eleven years old he began to compose. His first effort was characteristically daring. He set to music of a tolerably pretentious character the address of the children to King Charles on the occasion of the royal birthday. The title, or dedication, of the composition read:

"The Address of the Children of the Chapel Royal to the King, and to their Master, Captain Cooke, on His Majesty's birthday, A.D. 1670. Composed by Master Purcell, one of the Children of the said Chapel."

In 1672 Captain Cooke died, and his place in the Chapel Royal was filled by Pelham Humphrey, who was then twenty-five, and almost at the end of his brief but remarkable career. He was Harry Purcell's master until his own death in 1674, when Harry completed his studies under Dr. Blow,—who had been another of Cooke's pupils, and one of the first choristers ever trained after the Restoration.

Upon Blow's tomb, according to his request, is the inscription:

"Master to the famous Mr. H. Purcell."

Purcell studied ceaselessly, although his genius, as has been pointed out by many writers, was of that vivid and inspirational order which appears to require but little rigid education. He has been compared to Mozart in this respect.

In 1680,—when he was twenty-two,—so great was his genius and so marvellous his work, that Dr. Blow, then organist of Westminster Abbey, resigned his position in his favour. This post will always be closely associated with Purcell, and until his death remained one of the chief sources of pride and happiness in his life.

And so the "Beautiful Purcell" sat at the great Westminster organ, and created giant harmonies, that stormed, and surged, and died away in angelic whispers down the echoing cathedral aisles. The visions which must have come to him as he played were surely of things beyond the conception of ordinary mortals. For his were eyes that had been touched by the miracle of divine sight.

Yet he was delightfully human,—so human that some persons, mistaking infectious and genial merriment for unseemly levity, and a love for good fellowship, for a taste for carousal and dissipation, have

marred his memory with derogatory stories,—which seem, luckily, to bear the hall-mark of untruth.

It was during the year of his appointment as organist to the Abbey that he wrote his famous opera "Dido and Æneas."

At this time one Mr. Josias Prast, erstwhile theatrical dancing-master, was the principal of a "Boarding School for Young Gentlewomen at Chelsey, removed from Leicester Fields. . . ." It was at his school that "Dido" was performed. We read that it was "Given by the young gentlewomen, the words being made by Master Nate [*Nahan*] Tate, the music composed by Master Henry Purcell. . . . The Epilogue was spoken by the Lady Dorothy Burke."

Purcell is reported to have sung one of the rôles himself,—and that a feminine one! The accounts of the performance are vague and fragmentary, but the opera-score itself is its own best witness as to its value. In "Dido's Lament" Purcell achieved the task of writing a complete, spontaneous and varied melody, with an unchanging "ground bass" of five bars,—and one built upon the chromatic scale at that!

The following year, when Purcell was twenty-three, he married. His bride was Frances Peters, the daughter of "Thomas Peters, Gentleman, of St. Clement's Danes."

We know very little of Frances Purcell,—his "*loveing* wife," as he calls her in his will,—but from certain

little over-scrupulous observances of her dead husband's wishes in after years, we may believe her to have been a woman both of sentiment and principle. Their life was not always happy, for they lost several children, and met many of the griefs and trials common to the most blessed of human beings, but on the whole it seems to have been a most fortunate and happy marriage. The persons who seem to like to make Mistress Purcell out a cross between a ghoul and a murderess fail, happily, to produce testimony for their suppositions.

So far from being the hard and untender woman of these legends, there is evidence to show that Frances Purcell was, in all ways and at all times, the "*loveing* wife" which her husband termed her. And as the document in which this phrase occurred, and which left all his worldly goods to her, was made out when he was upon his death-bed, the inference seems a fairly definite refutation of the *canards* circulated against her. Her own tender remembrance of her husband,—not only in her well-known dedication of the "Orpheus Britannicus" (a collection of his songs) to Lady Elizabeth Howard, but in the records of her life,—seem to clear his name also from the slanders of the unthinking or malicious.

It is true that Purcell loved gay companionship, good wine, and merrymaking of all kinds. Hogarth says that "he appears to have been gay and good-

humoured and of social habits." He loved to wander about London with those two witty scapegraces, Tom Brown and Tom D'Urfey. Who loved a clever phrase or a keen jest better than Harry Purcell? And who was more welcome at a gathering of congenial souls,—whether in an ale-house or the Court of King Charles?

Lock, his father's old friend, loved him dearly, and was never content to spend a merry evening without "Harry."

"Dear Harry (we find him writing): Some of the Gentlemen of His Majestie's Musick will honour my poor lodgings this evening, and I would have you come and join them; bring with thee, Harry, thy last anthem, and also the canon we tried over together at our last meeting. Thine in all kindness,

"M. Lock."

Tom Brown is too well known a figure in the history of English literature to require much comment. All the word knows the truth of what Hogarth says: "Brown lived in ale-houses and taverns, employing his own ingenuity in baffling his creditors and their emissaries, the bailiffs; and Purcell, with others who delighted in the brilliancy of his conversation, was too often the partaker of his vigils.

But what could one expect when, in addition to the charm of Tom Brown's personality, there was the

magic of a place like Cobweb Hall to be taken into consideration? For "Cobweb Hall" was the delicious name of the public-house most frequented by these men of genius. It was kept by one Master Owen Swan, and it stood in Bartholomew Lane. Swan was a vintner possessed of a well-stocked cellar, and the wine, that ran in rivulets of purple-red from dusk till dawning, was of the best. Hour after hour Tom Brown would tell his tales, and crack his jokes, and drink his wine or ale. And Tom D'Urfey, that inexpressibly coarse but inexpressibly amusing and imaginative humourist, would find many a jest with which to touch off the fire of the greater brain.

And Purcell would listen, keenly alive to the shafts of wit flying about,—and put in a word or two now and then, or else fall to dreaming, suddenly penning in his brain the filmy phrases of an elfin melody, or the thrill and dramatic splendour of a "mad song."

It was such fanciful themes which pleased him best. And never, as a matter of fact, save in "The Tempest" and in Dryden's "King Arthur," did he find such congenial inspiration as in the "mad lyrics" in "The Fool's Preferment." And D'Urfey,—the author of "Pills to Purge Melancholy," positively!—wrote it.

When one knows Purcell's peculiar genius for dealing with the fantastic and fanciful, it is easy to see how he was able to compose one of his finest songs upon the following stanzas,—supposed, by the bye,

to be sung by a young lover who has gone mad because of his lady's disdain:

"I'll sail upon the Dog-star,
And then pursue the morning!
I'll chase the Moon till it be noon,
But I'll make her leave her Horning.

"I'll climb the frosty Mountain,
And there I'll coin the weather;
I'll tear the Rainbow from the sky,
And tie both ends together.

"The stars pluck from their orbs, too,
And crowd them in my budget:
And, whether I'm a roaring boy,—
Let all the nation judge it!"

"The Fool's Preferment" was written for William Mountford. "He sung a clear counter tenor," says Colley Cibber, "and had a melodious, warbling voice." It was Mountford who interfered with the plot of Lord Mohun and Captain Hill to abduct Anne Bracegirder, the actress, and who subsequently was stabbed to death by way of revenge.

Purcell was noted for his wonderfully beautiful musical odes to the crowned heads which it was his fate to serve. He wrote quantities of odes for Charles II., and in 1685 he had a new ode of welcome for James II., —and another for his coronation. Still later, when James had departed and William and Mary reigned, he composed more and still more odes. With all his

sincerity and simplicity, one is tempted at times to suspect the making of a very finished courtier in "the Beautiful Purcell!"

In 1687 Purcell wrote a "March and Quickstep" which have since become famous nearly all over the world. It happened that the Earl of Tyrconnel, a renowned Papist, had just been made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland by James II. In 1688 he was re-nominated. This fact, annoying Lord Wharton, the Irish Viceroy (who for political reasons had desired to see Tyrconnel defeated),—he raked up some seemingly doggerel verses with the refrain of "Lilli, lilli, lilli burlero," and set them to Purcell's Quickstep.

Then he gave the song to the army, who loved it, and improvised fresh verses. Lord Wharton contrived to insinuate an enormous amount of the necessary political feeling into the military ranks through this seemingly innocent channel.

"Ho, broder Teague, dost hear de decree?
(Lilli burlero, bullen a la!)"

Thus it ran:

"Dat we shall have a new deputy,—
(Lilli burlero, bullen a la!)
Lero, lero, lilli burlero," etc.

"Perhaps never," says Bishop Burnet, "had so slight a thing so great an effect."

For it was successful,—oh, decidedly! "Through

that song," vowed Lord Wharton, "I have sung a deluded prince out of three kingdoms!"

Dr. Charles Mackay insists that the refrain of this song was not "doggerel" but an old Celtic phrase. It was partly written by a well-known Irish writer,—author of the "Irish Hudibras," and Dr. Mackay finds in its apparently nonsensical syllables the germs of a druidical chant:

"Li! Li Beur! lear-a! Buille na la! (Light! Light on the sea beyond the promontory! 'Tis the stroke [or dawn] of the morning!)"

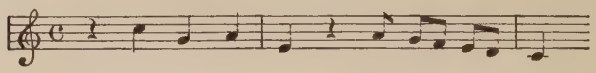
The Quickstep starts off as follows:

Ho, bioder Teague dost hear de de-cree? Lilli burlero, bullen a la!

Purcell's amazingly prolific gift will not permit the enumeration of his compositions, which comprised songs, operas, church music, and every form of musical effort. His two greatest achievements always will be bones of contention among musicians, for no one can decide which is the greater,—the most truly inspired: "The Tempest" or "King Arthur." In a choice of lyrics one hesitates between "Full fathom five" and "Let not a moon-bound elf mislead you;" and between

"Come unto these yellow sands" and "Two daughters of this aged stream."

All have the fanciful, magical quality which discloses Purcell at his best. But on the whole it is the "Tempest" music which best stands the test of time and familiarity. The "ding-dong" melody of "Full fathom five" is well known:



"Full five fathom thy father lies . . ."

The pianissimo chorus, "Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell," is the most mystical, dream-like thing imaginable.

Many persons insist that "King Arthur" (composed 1691) is Purcell's master-work, but melodious and powerful as it is, it lacks the freshness, freedom, and charm of the two famous songs from "The Tempest."

His anthems and settings of the church services are still used by organists with sufficient artistic perception, and are uniformly beautiful.

Of his single songs, "I attempt from Love's Sickness to fly," is generally considered the greatest. The most dramatic without question, and the most interesting (in this Hogarth and many other writers agree) is his celebrated "Mad Bess,"—sometimes called "Bess of Bedlam." Particularly expressive is the music accompanying the lines:

"Poor Bess will return to the place whence she came;
Since the world is so mad she can hope for no cure:
For Love's grown a bubble, a shadow, a name,
That fools do adore, and wise men endure."

One day Queen Mary, being in the mood for music, sent for Purcell, Gostling, and Arabella Hunt, the great soprano,—she to whom Congreve wrote the ode: "To Mistress Arabella Hunt, singing." Purcell was the accompanist, and, as a matter of courtesy alone, might reasonably have expected to be asked for one of his own compositions,—especially as he had written many for Mistress Hunt. To his chagrin and the amusement of the other artists, the Queen's first request was for the popular country ballad, "Cold and raw!"

The Queen's birthday followed close upon this episode, and Purcell, in setting to music Sir Charles Sedley's ode in honour of the occasion ("Love's Goddess sure was Blind"), built his bass upon the air of "Cold and raw!" So marked was this melody that the Queen could not fail to recognise it, and she was duly surprised. William H. Husk says: "Purcell, nettled at finding a common ballad preferred to his music, but seeing it pleased the Queen, determined that she should hear it again when she least expected it!"

The story regarding Purcell's death, which is so irritating to just and rational minds, is that Purcell

having remained too late at a tavern, one winter night, his wife refused to admit him on his return; and that he, catching a severe cold from the exposure, died as a result of Mistress Purcell's rigid discipline. Now, putting all other questions aside, it seems incredible that any man of human intelligence would stand meekly on his doorstep until morning freezing to death. Were there, then, no taverns open still?

Fortunately almost every modern historian has done his best to explode this monstrous tradition. The probable, if not certain, truth of the matter is that Purcell inherited his father's phthisical tendency, and that some trifling cold during severe weather terminated in inflammation of the lungs, and thus death. More space need not be given to the absurd hypothesis accepted for so many years.

Henry Purcell died at the early age of thirty-seven. What he might have done and been, had death not intervened, no man can say. He was one of those prodigious geniuses whose vigour and inspiration are lavished in such abundance that, from sheer cosmic economy, Fate can only permit them a few decades of activity. Whom the gods love die young; and if ever man bore the insignia of divine approbation it was "the Beautiful Purcell."

He died on the 21st of November, 1698, upon the eve of the Feast of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. Cummings, who better than any one alive,

perhaps, knows the life and work of the great English master, gives the following hypothetical but beautiful account of his death:

". . . In a house on the west side of Dean's Yard, Westminster, in a darkened chamber, the dying musician was lying on the couch, in full possession of all his faculties, as he himself had just said in his will, but with a thorough knowledge that he was about to pass into the land of shadows. He could possibly hear some faint murmurs of the evensong service wafted from the old Abbey close by, perhaps some well-remembered phrase of one of his own soul-stirring anthems. The psalm of the day which would be chanted at that evening service concluded with words which he had set to music the world was not likely soon to forget,—music which still remains unsurpassed in truthfulness and dignity. A more noble or a more fitting death chant for a child of song it would be difficult to find.

> "'Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,
> From everlasting world without end,
> And let all the people say Amen.'"

He had written some grave and touching music for Queen Mary's funeral a short time before, and it was this music which was played at his own last service.

The tombstone, erected by Lady Elizabeth Howard, bears this inscription:

"Here lies

HENRY PURCELL, ESQ.,

Who left this life
And is gone to that blessed place
Where only his own harmony can be excelled.

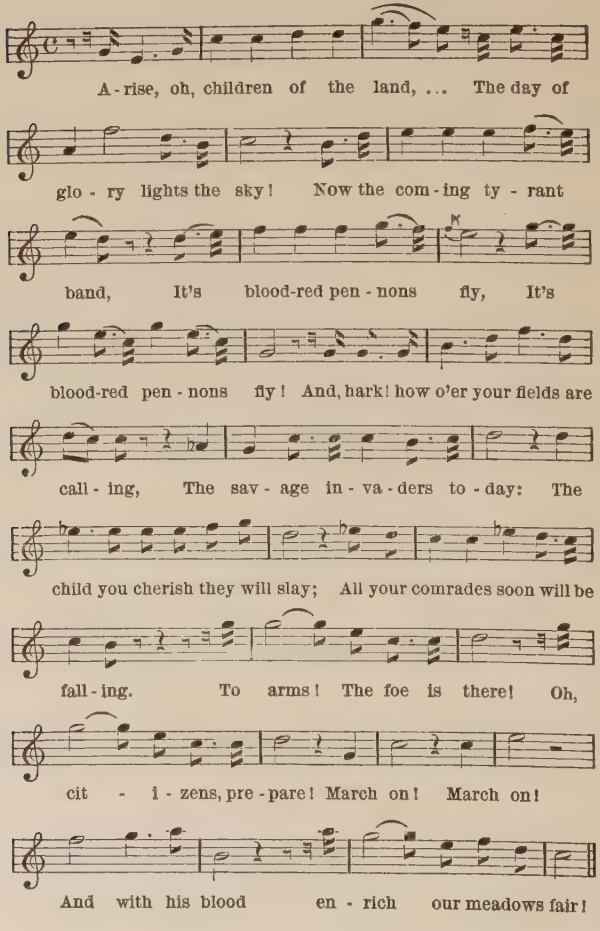
Obiit 21 mo—die Novembris,
Anno Aetatis suae 37 mo,
Annoque Domine 1695."

Beneath this is the epitaph beginning "Plaudite, filias suplir tanto hospite," which, translated, runs as follows:

"Applaud so great a guest, celestial powers,
Who now resides with you, but once was ours:—
Yet let invidious earth no more proclaim
Her short-lived favourite and her chiefest fame,
Complaining that so prematurely died
Good-nature's pleasure and devotion's pride.
Died? No! he lives while yonder organs sound,
And sacred echoes to the choir rebound."

SONGS OF THE GREAT TERROR

THE MARSEILLAISE


A - rise, oh, children of the land, ... The day of
glo - ry lights the sky! Now the com - ing ty - rant
band, It's blood-red pen - nons fly, It's
blood-red pen - nons fly! And, hark! how o'er your fields are
call - ing, The sav - age in - va - ders to - day: The
child you cherish they will slay; All your comrades soon will be
fall - ing. To arms! The foe is there! Oh,
cit - i - zens, pre - pare! March on! March on!
And with his blood en - rich our meadows fair!

XVI

SONGS OF THE GREAT TERROR

"THE officials note that large numbers of sinister-looking men pass the barriers inwards. . . . The general aspect of the mob changes; it contains now a quantity of strangers from all parts of the country, mostly in rags and armed with great sticks, whose look is very menacing. . . . Vagabonds, ragged fellows, many almost naked, with appalling faces—beings one does not remember to have seen by daylight,—a frightful physiognomy, a hideous attire. . . ."

Thus Taine. And so, in a few words, we have a picture of that ominous time just before the dammed-up fury of centuries rose to engulf the existing powers, good and evil alike. "Beings one does not remember to have seen by daylight." Of what deadly significance is that phrase! These were the days when the strange and fiendish night-birds might fly in the broad sunlight, when Vice had no need to skulk in alley-ways, and when the spirits of Murder and Madness gloated over the goodly harvest to come. For it was the

memorable spring of 1794,—the beginning of the Great Terror.

So much has been written of this frightful but absorbing period of French history, that it would be absurd to venture even a casual account of it here. It is not the Revolution with which we have to do so much as its songs,—of which there was an amazingly large crop. As in every great national movement, the people's emotions were poured into music. Find a nation who does not sing its great moments and you will find a dumb people.

Constant Pierre says that there were nearly three thousand lyrics born of the Revolution. Everyone sang, the nobles and the citizens, the butchers and the butchered, the prisoners and the gaolers. The songs they sang covered the entire range of emotions awakened by the Terror, but in each and all one quality predominated,—a wild and savage gaiety. There is not a song of this period without a thrill in it.

Most of them were merely new verses set to old airs, but not only were the tunes chosen of a peculiarly stirring character, but the words written for them were of the sort to galvanise a Gregorian chant into something spirited and electrifying.

For us the songs have the additional fascination, albeit of a gruesome order, of their terrible associations. No one to-day can hear "La Cannaguole" and "Ça ira" without a mental picture of a crowd of howl-

ing, singing savages, carrying on a work of demoniac destruction and brutality, while the heavens rang with these infectious melodies, and with the grimly significant words:

"Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira."

or

"Oui, je suis sans culotte, moi!"

The spirit of the times is truthfully mirrored in the Revolutionary songs,—both the savagery of the people and the debonnair courage of the aristocrats. Some of the lyrics composed by the nobles in prison are of the sort to quicken the pulses for very admiration of such splendid carelessness.

They sang all the vaudeville melodies and popular songs which they could remember, and then they invented new ones. The words of these Royalist lyrics were usually of the order that particularly enraged their gaolers,—exhibiting the courtesy, gay spirits and utter indifference to discomforts, dangers and inferior persons, which had so incensed and piqued the Communists from the beginning.

Pierre says that "One made songs about the scanty prison fare; another upon prison life in general." One wrote a poem begging his friends after he had gone to the guillotine, to spill, "instead of tears, a few flagons of Bordeaux!"

Their verses were full of references to their approaching execution, and to the horrors of the Revo-

lution, but always treated in a light, reckless and jesting vein. Their comments on their situation were invariably cheerful or ironic, and most of the lines seem sparkling with a feverish and reckless nonchalance. There is hardly a melancholy song among them all. The saddest one known to us was written by a mother whose baby girl was born in prison.

One of the most renowned Royalist songs was "Pauvre Jacques," by the Marquise de Travenet. Among the composers of these lyrics we find the names: Ducourneau, Coittant, Montjourdain, Duromeau, Ducos, Fontaine, Goujon, etc.

Among the few songs common to both Royalists and Revolutionists were two airs by André Grétry: the first, "Richard, ô mon roi," from his opera "Richard Cœur de Lion," and the other the melody of a quartet from "Lucile," beginning:

"Où peut on être mieux
Qu'au sein de sa famille?
(Where could one be better
Than in the bosom of one's family?)"

Both of these melodies were sung at a famous banquet at Versailles at the very beginning of the Revolution, in 1789, and were immensely popular with the Court. But the Communists picked up both songs, and became particularly fond of "Où peut on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?"—singing it with ferocious irony, while they hacked their way into Roy-

alist dwellings. The satire of this use of it is so keen that one wonders to hear of the *Sans Culottes* having thought of it.

They also appropriated "Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre," though it was closely associated with Marie Antoinette, who sang it often, and with the little Dauphin, for whom it had been used as a cradle-song by his Picardy nurse. Fitzgerald says that Barras sang "Malbrouck," and Marat also, and that "Charlotte Corday probably knew it by heart."

But it is their own characteristic songs which we find most interesting for every reason,—the three great lyrics of the Terror, "La Carmagnole," "Ça ira," and the "Marseillaise."

"La Carmagnole" was a dance song, which is said to have come from Provence. Some persons, Grétry among others, believed it to have been a sailor's song originating in Marseilles; others consider it simply a country dance-air to which patriotic and insurgent verses were set.

The original stanza, written in August, 1792, was something like this:

"The cannon's roar begins to sound,
Make ready for the battle-ground:
Now soldiers in the grey,
And citizens so gay,
All dance the Carmagnole;—
Hark to the roar, hark to the roar!
All dance the Carmagnole!

Hearken once more:
The cannon's roar!"

The stanza invented during the Great Terror,—the summer of 1794,—was of a different sort:

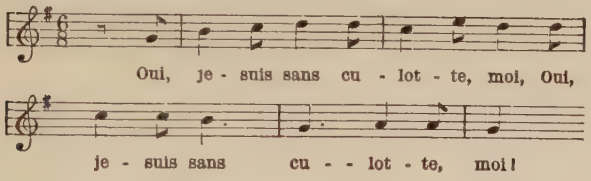
"Yes, I'm a Sans Culotte, am I,
To vex the Royalists I try;
Long live the Marseillaise
And Breton laws and ways!
Come! Dance the Carmagnole,
Hark to the roar, hark to the roar!—
Come! Dance the Carmagnole;
Hearken once more:
The cannon's roar!"

They also set to the "Carmagnole" air the famous verses ridiculing "Madame Veto," as they called Marie Antoinette.

Louis having enraged the National Assembly by insisting upon the reservation of his right to veto any bill which he disliked, the people had nick-named him "Veto." The Queen was called Madame Veto to the last. The first stanza of the poem referring to her is:

"Madame Veto once proudly said
That she all Paris would behead.
That stroke, though, never falls,
Thanks to our cannon-balls.
Oh, dance the Carmagnole!
Hark to the roar, hark to the roar!
Oh, dance the Carmagnole,
Hearken once more,
The cannon's roar!"

The melody begins in this fashion:



It was sung, and danced to, and marched to all over Paris, and Royalists shivered when they heard echoing down the street the seemingly innocent refrain which had come to stand for horror incarnate:

"Dansons la Carmagnole,
Vive le son
Du cannon!"

Almost more terrible, in its close association with every step of the Terror, is "Ça ira." This was one of the first songs of the Revolution, and was sung by the Parisian citizens who presented themselves at Versailles in 1789 to demand a hearing.

Later it became the accompaniment of some of the most hideous deeds of the Red June and July. The following stanzas show the first and last stages of its poetic development, for, of course, verses were added constantly to express the humour of the hour:

(Sung in 1789):

"Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
Aloud all day everyone repeats it:
Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
Though knaves be stubborn we shall succeed!"

(Sung in 1794):

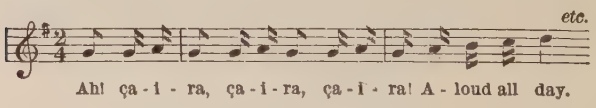
"Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
Take the proud aristocrats and kill them!
Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
The aristocrats must all be hanged!"

The phrase "ça ira" is difficult to translate. It means, of course, "That will go," and was intended to express assured and insolent confidence.

While in America General Lafayette had often heard Benjamin Franklin exclaim, when asked for news of the Continental army: "Ça ira (It will go)!" General Lafayette liked the phrase, and one day he repeated it to Ladré, a street-singer of Paris. Ladré built upon it the first stanzas of the famous Revolutionary marching song.

The melody was a popular air called "Carillon National," which had been composed by Bécourt, a drummer in the Opera Orchestra. Poor Queen Marie Antoinette had liked it immensely in the old days!

The savage doggedness of the rhythm is eminently in keeping with the words, and the actual tune is most infectious and full of movement:



There is a certain grim attraction about these gay little songs with their horrible pasts. The fearful joy

in horrors which is born of a love for the supremely dramatic, and which lurks in the souls of most of us, responds to the fateful melodies of the "Carmagnole" and "Ça ira." The "Marseillaise," greatest of all Revolutionary songs, has been washed comparatively clean by some years of honest patriotism; but the other frightful little lyrics have never lost a blood-stain. They remain demoniac and ghoulish, with tinkling laughter on the surface, but the weight of all the guilt in Purgatory on their small souls. It requires but a narrow play of fancy to imagine, when we sing these airs, that secretly they are recalling, with an evil joy, the days and nights of that Red Summer, when the people danced and sang the Carmagnole among the dead and dying, and surged through Paris in terrible, relentless billows of humanity to the tune of "Ça ira."

Other songs of the Terror were "Le Chant du Départ" (words by Chenier and music by Méhul), "Chant du Retour" and "Chant de Victorie" (also by Méhul), Père de l'Univers" (words by Desorgues and music by Gossec), "Cadet Rousselle," "Fanfare la Tulipe," "Recit du Caporal," "Chanson de Roland," etc.

The Communists were very musical in an unbridled and untrained fashion. They listened with delight to the Opéra Comique artists, Chenard, Narbnune, Chateaufort, Vallière, etc., whom they made sing for them until they were exhausted.

On one occasion they routed out the great master

Cherubini, who was living in Paris, to satisfy their melodious tastes! Naumann says: "He was dragged from his house and paraded about the streets by a band of *Sans Culotte* ruffians, who finally made him provide music for the accompaniment of their orgies. . . ."

We now come to the "Marseillaise," which is the national hymn of France to-day,—rather incongruously, considering the circumstances, as Mr. Fitzgerald has pointed out!

The writer of both words and music was Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle. He came of a Royalist family, was educated at the Mezières School of Royal Engineers, and was a brilliant soldier.

At the time when the "Marseillaise" was composed, April, 1792, he was first lieutenant in an artillery regiment stationed at Strassburg. He grew very intimate with the mayor, Baron de Dietrich, a delightful and entertaining Alsatian, and spent much of his time with him and his family.

On the night of April 24th, de Lisle was dining at the Dietrich house. They were all much excited over the recent commands from Luckner for the troops quartered at Strassburg to join him. In talking the matter over, Dietrich expressed his regret that the men had no patriotic song to sing as they started upon the march. That de Lisle had a decided musical gift was well known to them all, and suddenly the Baron was seized with an inspiration. Madame Ritter de-

clares that, owing to the war times, the fare was very meagre, their dinner that night consisting of "a few slices of ham and garrison bread." The Baron, after a rueful glance at the scanty feast, asked Rouget de Lisle if he thought that a bottle of rare Rhine wine could inspire him? And on de Lisle's begging to know what he meant, Dietrich told him that he should have the last bottle of wine in the cellar if he would try to write a patriotic song on the strength of it. De Lisle promised to do his best. "The ladies approved," continues Madame Ritter, "and sent for the last bottle of wine which the house could boast." The wine was drunk with appropriate toasts, and de Lisle went home to his lodgings.

Then, with the aid of violin and piano, paper, pens and ink, much humming, and many hours of trying over and rearranging,—he evolved a song. After which, being utterly exhausted, he went to sleep with his head on his desk. Next morning he took what he had written to the Baron. Dietrich was delighted, and arranged to have it sung publicly at an early date. It was sung by several different persons, and created enormous enthusiasm wherever it was heard. But it was only chance which made it the great national song of France.

A few months after its composition it was sung in Marseilles, by Mireur. So tremendous an effect did it have upon the public that it was impossible to fill the

demands for printed copies. The Volunteers were just leaving Marseilles for their march to Paris, and they adopted it as their *chanson de marche*. So when the hundreds of new revolutionists entered Paris they were singing Rouget de Lisle's song.

It began life under the title "A War Song for the Army of the Rhine; dedicated to the Maréchal Luckner," but it was soon known as the "Hymn of the Marseillaise," and finally as simply the Marseillaise.

With its adoption by the *Sans Culottes* Rouget de Lisle had nothing to do. He was a strict Royalist, and not only was cashiered from the army for refusing to subscribe to the Constitutional abolition of the Throne, but was imprisoned twice, and suffered every possible oppression at the hands of the very citizens who sang his composition with so much fervour!

Once when he was trying to escape capture among the Jura Mountains, the deadly signal of approaching imprisonment and perhaps death was the sound of his own song growing ever louder on the wind!

"What do people mean," demanded that uncompromising Royalist, his mother, "by associating our name with the Revolutionary hymn those brigands sing?"

Rouget de Lisle had a hard and unappreciated career, and died in 1830, in the direst poverty; though at the very end of his life he was made a member of the Legion of Honour.

The best translation of the original stanza of the "Marseillaise" was made by John Oxenford:

"Come, children of your country, come:
New glory dawns upon the world!
Our tyrants, rushing to their doom,
Their crimson standards have unfurled.
Already on our plains we hear
The murmurs of a savage horde,
They threaten with the murd'rous sword
Your comrades and your children dear.
Then up and from your ranks
The hireling foe withstand,—
March on, march on, his craven blood
Must fertilise the land!"

There have been great numbers of stories written about the composition of the "Marseillaise," but the foregoing seems to be better substantiated than the others. It has even been asserted that Rouget de Lisle did not write the song at all. Alexander Boucher, however, who put in the strongest claim of authorship, had not even taken the trouble to have his dates accurate; and no one has ever believed his story for a moment.

With the Thermidor reaction, a new song came into favour,—"Le Reveil du Peuple," the words being by Souriquère de Saint Marc, and the music by Pierre Gaveaux, conductor at the Opéra.

It represented the close of the Reign of Terror, and has been called the "Marseillaise of the Thermidor."

When it was first sung it was interrupted by constant shouts of "Du pain! Du pain! (Bread! Bread!)"—one of the early war-cries of the Revolution. But it grew in favour as the violence of public feeling abated.

The day came when, on the commencement of the "Marseillaise" at the Opéra, numbers of persons sprang to their feet crying: "We do not want the 'Marseillaise' any longer. Give us the 'Reveil du Peuple'!"

Thus was the end, like the beginning, of the Great Terror celebrated in song.

But the "Marseillaise," unlike the other Revolutionary airs, was a song born to live. Since it has been accepted as the national anthem of France, it has nobly expiated its early life of lawlessness and crime, and inspired many a noble effort of genuine courage and patriotism. Yet it will always bear about it the haunting memory of those mouths of 1794.

"It received from the circumstances amid which it arose," wrote Lamartine, "an especial character that renders it at once solemn and sinister; glory and crime, victory and death, are mingled in its strains."

It is true that with all its fieriness of inspiration, and its magnificence of patriotic feeling, the "Marseillaise" will never be disassociated in our minds from the great national Tragedy in which it played so dark a part. Beautiful and soul-stirring it is, and full

of that strong national spirit which makes for greatness, but to us, despite our love for it, there will always be an echo of violent voices in its music. There will always come with it a vision of crowded streets and lantern light that too often showed a blur of red on pavement or threshold; or a vision of sunlight flashing in the merciful steel of the guillotine, and the jeering countenances of the citizens and citoyennes who had come to see the thing well done; a vision painted in sombre and lurid hues,—the red of rage and the black of tragedy, a vision of the mighty, marvellous, thrilling pitiless Terror.

Of all the descriptions of the "Marseillaise" ever written there is none so fine as that of Heinrich Heine. His sensitive appreciation seized upon the vivid qualities of the great song, and inspired him with images and phrases such as only he knew how to combine. And this is what he wrote in his own inimitable style, the purest prose extant:

"A strong joy surges over me as I sit writing! Music resounds under my window, and in the elegiac rage of its large melody I recognise that hymn with which the handsome Barbaroux and his companions once greeted the city of Paris. What a song! It thrills me with fiery delight, it kindles within me the glowing star of enthusiasm and the swift rocket of desire. Swelling, burning torrents of song rush from the heights of freedom, in streams as bold as those

with which the Ganges leaps from the heights of the Himalayas! I can write no more,—this song intoxicates me. Louder and nearer advances the powerful chorus:

"'Aux armes citoyens!'"

AN AFTER-WORD

AN AFTER-WORD

IT has been the author's effort to indicate in the preceding pages the men who have in the most marked degree influenced the development of song. In such an attempt, where personal opinion and taste play so large a part in the choice of composers, a writer is inevitably the recipient of much criticism and censure. This fact leads the author to avail herself of the present opportunity to state that, in most cases, she has taken pains to substantiate her own judgment by the views of critics and historians whose standpoints cannot be questioned. In regard to such departures as the inclusion among the song-makers such men as Lully, Stradella and John of Fornsete, the author considers that she will require no justification beyond a careful study, first of the works of these composers, and second, of the lyrical productions immediately following their periods of activity.

The development of music, and especially of lyric music, has been a matter of such subtle and slow gradations that the task of particularising, enumerating, and selecting the dominant factors in the progress, has presented many difficulties. The outline here sub-

mitted is the result of much research and more consideration, but makes no claim nor pretense of covering the ground either adequately or fully. If the sign-posts here pointed out should lead some student into a far more comprehensive and thorough understanding of the history of Song than it has been the author's privilege to achieve, the aim and end of this book will have been more than fulfilled.

It remains only for the author to acknowledge the help which she has received from the following books:

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Cyclopædia of Music and Musicians (Scribner's).
Biographie Universelle des Musiciens (F. J. Fétis).
The Encyclopædias.
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General History of Music (John Hawkins).
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History of Music (George Hogarth).
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Troubadours and Courts of Love (Rowbotham).
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Purcell (William H. Cummings).

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